

## **Blueprints and Actors for Logan Renewal Initiative – Are they embryonic of a viable social housing partnership between government and not-for-profit sectors?**

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**Abstract:** Logan City, in Queensland, is home to thousands of Social Housing (SH) consumers and is typical of the dire state of the SH sector in Australia. Logan Renewal Initiative by Queensland Government envisages a complete renewal of SH in Logan partnering with a not-for-profit (NFP) Community Housing Provider (CHP). Among the qualitative changes being aspired are a good social mix, housing that better meets the needs of tenants in terms of dwelling size, accessibility for disabled and/or aged persons and efficient access to services. The current policy inclinations that the SH provision can be efficiently handled by NFP CHPs, have their roots in the neo-liberal housing policies being emerged from 70s.

In the latest forms of neo-liberal policies, SH partnerships between Governments and NFP are deemed to be entities that can emulate the market to generate efficiencies and innovation. Nevertheless, SH has become the housing option for most disadvantaged sections in the community due to previous generation of neo-liberal housing policies where the package of housing supports from the government failed to address the demand for affordable housing and SH. This study obtained the views of the Not-for-Profit sector and government officers who took part in the planning process of LRI on the project viability. The views of NFP sector point to a substantial disconnect and distrust between top-down expectations and what they deem as pragmatic for LRI. The views of the government officers demonstrate their confusion as to the sharing of responsibilities between them and to NFP counterparts.

### **Introduction**

#### ***The purpose of the case study and theoretical implications***

Current stage of LRI project has confronted a number of issues affecting its viability. First, the project being planned as a long term management contract with a NFP CHP does not exactly match with the objectives of the macro policy framework. The policy framework includes national policies National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and National Registration System for Community Housing (NRSCH) and state policy Housing 2020. Aim of this policy framework is to provide greater autonomy to CHPs partnering in projects such as LRI so they can adapt market principles to renew and grow SH in contrast to their government counterparts. The growth and renewal of SH under the management of State Housing Authorities has been overdue by decades (Pawson and Wiesel 2014). Second, the conservative government who initiated the project under their Housing 2020 policy is no longer in power and the new government has taken a cautious approach as to how to engage with NFP CHPs.

This case study aims to examine how viable the LRI project process is from the view points of key stakeholders. The key stakeholders who were consulted include two groups. The first group was the officers of the department of housing and public works (HPW) who got involved in the planning process of LRI. The second group was NFP CHPs who got involved in LRI either as tenderers or observers. The major consideration in examining views of the stakeholders was the responsibilities to be shared between government and NFP counterpart for the viability of LRI. Moreover, the top-down policy approach has assigned roles and responsibilities for the project partners. The real success of the project depends on

how comfortable the partners are on the responsibilities assigned to them and how flexible the process is for local adaptation. By analyzing views of the stakeholders the case study aims to uncover how viable the roles and responsibilities assigned to project partners for a viable partnership.

By analyzing the totality of stakeholder views, the study aims to unfold how far projects like LRI contributes (or not) towards generating Queensland specific SH process where CHPs and government interact in a unique way. It is also aimed to connect the findings of this case study to the wider theoretical debate on the viability of SH partnerships as quasi market 'neo-liberal' approaches to address contemporary SH issues. The approaches like LRI are neo-liberal in essence as they assume partnerships between NFPs and governments are able to provide a service which both government and market has failed to provide. On one angle of the theoretical discourse, Peck et al seems to argue that place and time contingent success of neo-liberal approaches relates to the level of 'variegation' they demonstrate. According to them binary opposed interpretations of neo-liberalism, (a) as *hegemonic and omnipresent* and (b) as *unstable and contextually specific*, need to be transcended to see the possibility 'variegation' where hegemonic principles and context interacts to generate the balance (Brenner, Peck et al. 2010) (Peck and Tickell 2002). LRI is based on top-down neo-liberal policies such as NRSCH and NAHA which emphasize the need for the government to form partnerships with NFP CHPs to address long overdue SH issues in Australia. On the other hand Logan SH issues are peculiar to the SH policy path owned by Queensland. The LRI case study, therefore, is able to test interaction between local SH situation in Logan as an inheritance of Queensland's approach to SH with the top-down policies to improve the situation and determine whether a unique project is being evolved thus contributing towards the 'variegation' theory.

Recent housing research embody substantial pool of case studies investigating local effectiveness of various neo-liberal SH partnerships between governments and their NFP counterparts. Albeit geographically diverse, these case studies converge to realize that achievement of a locally successful SH partnership is more difficult than conceptualization of them in theory. Kim McKee's study of a SH transfer in Glasgow from the angle of tenants using Foucauldian Governmentality theory is one example. McKee's study unfolds how the project was not very successful in empowering tenants as expected by the power decentralization implemented under the project (McKee 2011). The case study on Ontario SH restructure by Hackworth and Moriah is a similar case study. The Ontario study shows how neo-liberal SH reforms of the province were not effective in delivering desired results and most of the decentralized NFP structures that replaced government structures were not able to match the responsibility assigned to them due to lack of resources (Hackworth and Moriah 2006). The study by Gilmore and Milligan on the diversity of NFP SH providers in Australia demonstrate a good typology of NFP CHP models being used in Australia. Analysis by them caution that practically possible diversity and innovation may not be as diverse as what might be possible in theory (Gilmour and Milligan 2012). Moreover number studies by Pawson et al comparing evolution of NFP SH sector in UK and Australia demonstrates how the historical policy path matters in creating viable SH partnerships between governments and their NFP counterparts (Pawson and Pawson 2006, Pawson and Gilmour 2010, Pawson and Mullins 2010). Further additions to this growing body of case studies on NFP based SH models is important in generating a broad evidence base on successes and failures of such models and LRI case study aims to contribute towards this broader purpose.

### ***Method of Study***

This case study is part of a large case study examining partnership between Queensland Government and Not-for-Profit CHPs in SH. The LRI case study has 3 main parts; policy background, project background, and stakeholder views. The data for the first two parts were available in various publications by stakeholders. The data collection for part 3 the of study was accomplished by conducting a series of

semi-structured interviews. These interviews were structured to find out specific views of two stakeholder groups about the viability of LRI project using 12 semi-structured interviews. Government officers who played a strategic role in developing partnerships with CHPs formed the first group. Second group constituted the CHPs who took part in the CHP selection process for LRI either as tenderers or observers.

The interview questions to stakeholders focused on two topics. First topic was the planning process for selection of a CHP for LRI. Second topic was about the compatibility of the LRI with higher order state and national policies. Interviewees were also asked to add any lessons being derived from the LRI process for future development of SH partnerships between government and CHPs in Queensland.

## **Case Study**

### ***LRI Policy Background***

Housing 2020 policy of the former conservative government was the key policy instrument behind the conceptualization of LRI. This policy envisaged to transfer 90% of Public Housing to Not-for-Profit CHPs by 2020. LRI was one of the five major urban renewal projects included in the Housing 2020 policy (Government 2013). The strategic goal of Housing 2020 was to transform current SH services delivered by government to a system mainly operated by CHPs. Therefore it was clear that the purpose of LRI was to pilot large SH partnerships with Not-for-Profit CHPs. Housing 2020 envisaged much higher role by CHPs in a shorter time compared to former state policies such as The Queensland Compact 2008 (Government 2008).

The key national policy instruments that LRI project and Housing 2020 in Queensland relates to are National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and National Registration System for Community Housing (NRSCH). NAHA, in 2009, replacing sixty year tradition of Commonwealth State Housing Agreement (CSHA) included a wide range policy areas such as homelessness, SH, and efficiency of private markets (Groenhart 2013). The NRSCH, however, has a direct relevance to LRI project and Housing 2020 policy. The role of NFP CHPs in SH in Australia has been small as depicted by SH portfolio they manage (approximately 16% in 2013) (AIHW 2014). Moreover there is no consistency across states in funding and engaging with CHPs. The NRSCH has planned to create registration system for CHPs so they can engage with their counterparts in both sectors state and private more efficiently. The NRSCH can be seen as a culmination of a joint effort by Australian Governments, during last 6 years, through Council of Australian Governments (COAG) to create an efficient and consistent national SH system that works as a partnership between Governments and CHPs (Francis 2013, Milligan 2013, Milligan, Pawson et al. 2015). Moreover the NRSCH approach also is expected to catalyze (a) transforming CHPs as mainstream operators of SH (b) making partnerships between governments and CHPs as vehicles for mobilizing capital investment from both sectors public and private to boost growth of SH (NRSCH 2014).

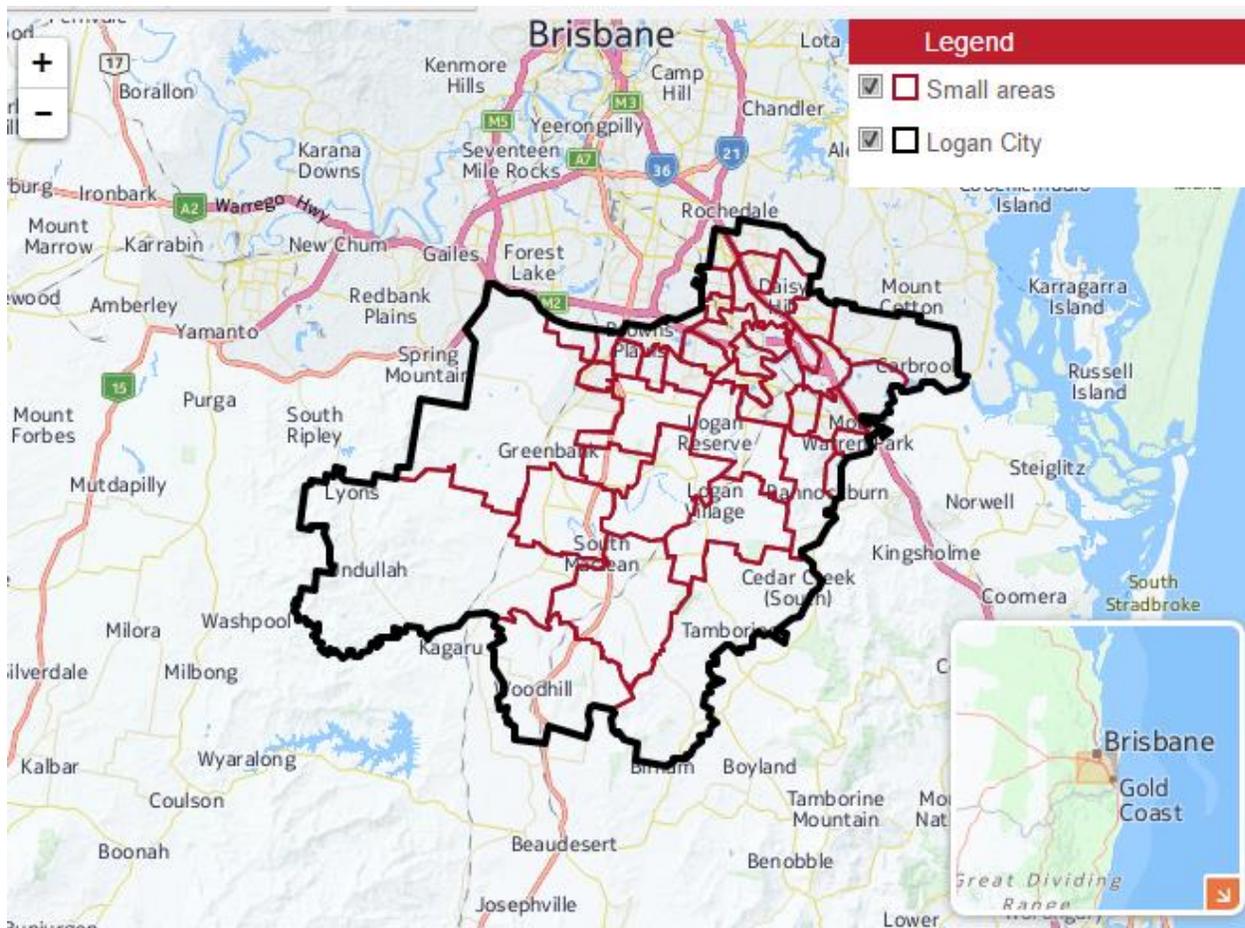
Comparison of the national policies with Queensland's Housing 2020 policy uncovered two important points. First, there is a general compatibility between two sides. Housing 2020 can be seen as a policy device to implement the national approach to change the state based SH system to CHP based one. Second point is about a key difference between two sides. Housing 2020 differed from the national context by incorporating a very ambitious quantitative target of 90% of SH owned and managed by state be transferred to CHPs by 2020. The corresponding national target was 35% by 2014 (Council 2009). The LRI became the first major SH transfer under Housing 2020 partly because of the quantitative significance of 4700 properties.

Moreover LRI in Queensland has become one of the significant projects in Australia facing ongoing policy challenges involving number of factors. First the conservative government who initiated this project

as a part of a massive neo-liberal restructure of public sector lost power after mere one term of government. Second, the new labor government seems to be reading the project history carefully without making quick decisions despite continued commitment to the project. Third, the new government seems also to review major housing policy Housing 2020 of the previous government that provided broad framework for LRI.

### **LRI - Project Background**

Logan City is situated between Brisbane and Gold Coast. The urban area of the Logan City is mainly wrapped around the network of motor ways that connect Logan with rest of South East Queensland mainly Brisbane, Gold Coast and Ipswich. See Fig. 1. Logan has a high concentration of SH (approximately 4700 dwellings) mostly in the form of detached dwellings most of which are more than thirty years old (74%)(KPMG 2012). The waiting list for SH in Logan amounts to more than 2100 households. This housing stock together with wait list is managed by Woodridge Housing Service Centre (WHSC) under Department of Housing Public Works (HPW).



**Figure 1- Logan City Location (Not to Scale)**

### **Aims of the LRI project**

Logan Renewal Initiative (LRI) aims to revitalize the majority of SH in Logan over 20 years in partnership with a major Not-for-profit Community Housing Provider (CHP) selected through competitive national tender process. The selected CHP is to absorb the current service delivery functions of the WHSC. The

new entity envisages replacing 1000 old dwellings with new 1600 SH dwellings and 1000 affordable dwellings creating a better social mix in addition to improvement of the efficiency of ongoing tenancy and property management (Government 2015). New housing composition is to constitute more one and two bed room dwellings to match with current demand. In relation to human services the new housing is expected to connect with key services such as employment, education, transport, health, shopping and childcare more efficiently.

### **LRI Process and Timeline**

The process of selection of a CHP included two phases. The phase one was for expression of interest (EOI) by CHPs. The timeline and milestones for phase 1 were as follows. In August 2012 the housing minister of the then new conservative government appointed a board to look into Logan housing situation amidst a major restructure being undertaken for the HPW as a part of massive public sector reform. In September 2012 HPW called for EOI from CHPs. There were 2 significant features to this EOI process. First it provided room for more than one CHP to form consortia in their EOI so a CHP with property development specialization could join with that of a property management specialization in one EOI. Second, it was a national tender.

In February 2013, HPW announced the results of EOI assessment that three consortia of CHPs had been short listed. The change of the minister in charge of HPW during EOI period would have had some impact of the project timeline. Being a national tender, two of the three short listed consortiums were made up of Queensland based CHPs while the third was a consortium of New South Wales based CHPs.

The second stage of the process, request for proposals, spanned over a period of approximately 18 months from March 2013. In September 2014 HPW announced Logan City Community Housing (LCCH) as the successful consortium. LCCH include two New South Wales based CHPs ; Compass Housing Services as the tenancy and property manger and Blue CHP as the property development arm with a speciality in AH. In expanding their Community Housing operations to Queensland Compass Housing Services have now absorbed the previously Brisbane based CHP 4Walls. This merger of an interstate major CHP with a Queensland based CHP for undertaking the LRI project is a significant event in Queensland CHP sector.

### **Current Status of the Project**

To October 2015, there has been a time lapse of more than one year since the announcement of the selection of LCCH. The operation of LRI project by LCCH has not yet been commenced. There was a change of the government in Queensland in 2015. While the new government has commitment to carry LRI forward, the change of government seems to have an impact on the project timeline. According to information published by LCCH the current forecast for commencement is end of 2015 (LCCH 2015).

### **Views of Stakeholders**

The views of the two stakeholder groups about the viability of LRI project obtained in the form of semi structured interviews was the third and most crucial part of this case study. The interviews were structured around 2 key themes; the viability of LRI planning process and effectiveness of strategic policy framework behind LRI. Responses are explained in the sequence CHPs first and government officers second. Personnel who were interviewed from government and CHPs will be pseudo named in the style of Gov1 and CHP1 respectively.

### ***Views of CHPs on LRI planning process***

In relation to the planning of the project all 5 CHPs had very specific views about some key elements of project planning such as problem analysis, desired outcomes, consultation of community and stakeholders and resources spent by the sector. As a totality all CHPs strongly emphasized that LRI lacked a good plan in terms of defining problems, outcomes being perused and a path to achieve outcomes. Majority of them also agreed that LRI failed consult key stakeholders such as CHPs, tenants and multitude of other service providers based in Logan.

### **CHPs on pre-project feasibility**

CHP1 is manager of medium size CH business based in Brisbane who took part in the EOI stage of the LRI tender process. They were very critical about the aims and objectives of the project. Expressing this they stated that "it is a good idea lost in everything else accompanied it." In relation to planning of procurement, CHP1 stated;

"It lacked planning, lacked rigorous critical analysis and conceptualization of the project was poorly done".

CHP1 was not convinced if LRI planning had any sound financial analysis. They pointed out that income available to CHPs in terms of rent assistance and tax status related savings still may not counter balance outflows that might be incurred with this kind of a project. CHP1 elaborated it by "these were targets that the department could not achieve any way and on top that they are adding additional responsibilities"

In relation to desired outcome CHP1's view was that it should have been a stock transfer compared to the management transfer it finally ended up to be. This view was very clear in their following statements.

"Big announcement raised everybody's expectations. Management transfer is a very very different scenario. You can't leverage. Those who won the contract in a very very difficult situation"

Moreover, what was increasingly clear from the CHP1's response was that it required a much better clarity as to what the end product need to be in terms of a SH partnership before the procurement had even started. In the opinion of CHP1, management transfer such as LRI doesn't allow room for any innovation.

CHP2 was from a bigger CH organization than CHP1 with majority of their operations being based on Queensland. CHP2's responses in relation to planning of LRI project were mostly similar to that of CHP1 with couple of differences. The major difference that emerged from CHP2 was about ownership of titles. According to CHP2, the issue of who should own the titles is not significant. The key issue according to them is the need for a proper market valuation of the portfolio for appropriate funding. Following statements from CHP2 clarify this view.

"Tasmania is the only one that met the target of 35% transfer to CHPs by 2014. They offered cash, land and it is a voluntary transfer. In Queensland it is a mandatory transfer and no cash or land on offer. In UK they value the stock depending on the actual value. If it is less than zero council pays the housing association"

CHP2 indicated they were not very particular on insisting title because of added responsibility it accompanies. They stated "what we insist is access to title when properties are up for redevelopment". The take home message from CHP2 was the need to do a proper cost benefit analysis as part of planning for a project like LRI.

The participant CHP3 is from a peak body responsible for capacity development of the CHPs funded by the government of Queensland. Even though CHP3 hasn't had any direct involvement in the planning of LRI project they were happy to provide their views about it. In regard to the planning of LRI, while the views expressed by CHP3 are generally compatible with the views of other CHPs they made a few specific remarks from the angle of development of the capacity of the sector. A key point emerged was that the way the project was planned had no or minimal contribution towards the development of the capacity of the CHPs. Following statements by CHP3 clarified this position.

“Interstate large scale providers will be the beneficiaries. Not clear to me what responsibilities those super providers have toward local small providers. They may be specialist services, local housing providers, you know“

In relation to the issue of title transfer, CHP3 was very similar to CHP1 as seen from following.

“Twenty year management plan does not build the capacity of the sector without title transfer. From my twenty years experience in ---- title transfer is important because it enable borrow against equity “

Participants CHP4 and CHP5 are medium size CHPs based in Sun Shine Coast and north Brisbane respectively. All 5 CHPs agreed that the planning of the project had not been rigorous and consultative enough compared to the scale of the project. From 5 CHPs, 2 were not very particular about transfer of titles.

#### **CHPs on resources and time spent in the procurement process**

In relation to time and resources spent from the CHP sector on the project all 5 CHPs strongly agreed that project consumed substantial amount of resources from the sector without sufficient benefits. CHP1 was of view it consumed tens of thousands of dollars from the sector yet they were doubtful whether the experience gained was comparable. Following statements from CHP1 highlighted this.

“Ours were more pro-bono effort compared to cash. I know some other providers spent tens of thousands of dollars, may be a million from the sector, even if it is \$500,000 it is a massive amount only for a transfer of management“

Even though CHP2 was not as specific as CHP1 there were indications that they had spent substantial amount of resources in the tender process. For example CHP1 on their involvement in the project had to say following.

“We were in the first two rounds, short listed for third, pulled out. For EOI our submission ended up being thousand pages“

As observable from CHP responses, they participated in the early phase with a huge enthusiasm spending a lot of resources and lost confidence on the project towards the last phase.

#### **CHPs on the question of consultation of the community and key stakeholders**

All CHPs had strong views that project planning could have been improved with some level community consultation. For example CHP1 emphasized their displeasure about the level of community consultation as below.

“Little or no consultation with the tenants and the wider community as well as local government, the people with planning powers. Decision making was isolated into the department of housing. It was driven by capital development rather than community development”

While CHP1’s emphasis was the lack of effort to engage with community hierarchy, in term of tenants, wider Logan community, and Logan City Council, CHP3 stressed the need to engage with local service providers in areas such as housing, health, employment and crime prevention. The message they tried to convey was an image of a project parachuted to the local community after being pre-fabricated elsewhere. CHP4 was very critical that the focus on people outcomes were gradually faded from project plan.

### ***Views of Government officers on LRI planning process***

The interviews done represented 4 different sections of HPW; SH transition, strategic asset management and development, Policy and Legislation and Industry Development Project. These interviews demonstrate that how the top down directions made the government officers to consider it as simple property outsourcing contract as time and resources were not there to take a broad consultative approach find out exact purpose of the project. The views being elicited from these personnel depicts how they had implemented the top down directions with a level of confusion.

Gov1 was a senior officer who is in charge of strategic aspects of major SH transfers like LRI. In relation to objective and financing of the project Gov1 explained following.

“It is a long term management contract. Government is not intending to transfer titles. Government will transfer the management and there are no other government funding in terms of cash and CHP is to manage the project using rental income that include any rental assistance that tenants are entitled”.

In relation to time line and specifically as to why it has taken nearly three years, Gov1 responded;

“It was a 2 stage process. The first stage was EOI for CHPs tell us who we are what we do etc. In second stage, proposals from short listed CHPs, we had to do a rigorous assessment of the viability of proposals from a number of angles such as legal, financial and property using private sector expert advice”.

Gov2 was from capital and asset side of HPW holding a senior position. His response as to what involved the planning of the project depicted that their role became more of a designing of out sourcing contract. This response points to expectation from government that, on one hand, CHPs might be able to earn higher rental income based on CRA and on the other hand they may have an efficient control of their expenditure side using tax concessions, efficient purchase of services and minimization of overheads. Asked if there are any possibilities for CHP to leverage, this officer responded that there were provisions in the contract. Gov4, middle level manager in the asset management pointed out from his experience of working with major CHPs that planning of LRI as large outsourcing contract was a mistake. In his view the capability of CHP sector should be tested through small scale transfers that provide opportunity for both sides to increase responsibility and resources as the partnership grows. Gov5, senior manager in charge of portfolio renewal is of view that drivers of the project were mainly two; the probable income boost with CRA and the critical mass it provides. According to Gov5 dependence on CRA as a major driver for projects like LRI is not prudent because the national CRA policy may subject to changes in the future.

### ***Question as to compatibility of LRI with the changing SH policy framework***

The change of government in Queensland in 2015 overthrowing the most powerful government in recent history provided a unique background for stakeholders to air their views on this question. The two follow up questions around the major issue of compatibility of LRI with the current policy environment were seemed very timely for the stakeholders. Two questions were (a) what the future for Housing 2020 policy is and (b) whether the NRSCH process in Queensland is evolving as a catalyst for major SH transfers such as LRI.

### **Responses of CHPs on SH policy**

All CHPs agreed that the approach by current government to review Housing 2020 policy and not to proceed with large transfers in the form of LRI was justifiable. How CHP1 put it across was below.

“They are taking a softly softly approach preferable to previous one. They got elected on day one , in day two, here is the plan, not talking to anybody who knows anything about housing”

Both CHP2 and CHP3 shared the above views using different terminology. For example CHP2 in relation to Housing 2020 remarked “it is gone”. CHP3 referring to the same policy stated “new minister may not pursue this form again”. This is a clear paradox that community sector stakeholders who wanted public housing to be transferred to the community providers are now questioning the policy with same objective. What this means for LRI is that it has to be operated in a different policy set-up than the one it was born with.

On the question whether NRSCH is an efficient national framework for community housing, the core message from all CHPs interviewed was another paradox. They all agreed that the intention of NRSCH is good in principle but the way it is being implemented is not making the system any better. For example CHP1 had specific remarks.

“I would like to see a national system state managed. It was to provide comfort and certainty to bring private investment into housing provision. Victoria says they are operating within a consistent model. They have not signed up. So we don't have a national system. All talk of that process facilitating investment is no more”.

CHP3 from a peak body too had similar views.

“In UK, strong regulator role is to ensure funding and continuity of operation independent of how the individual organization performs. Australian NRSCH aims to do the same thing. It is very early days yet. But at the moment State Housing Authority role is a monopoly being all of these, regulator, funder, planning policy. Regulation must be taken out of SHAs”

CHP2 while expressing similar views emphasized that NRSCH has duplicated reporting to be done. The relationship of these findings to the LRI project is that if the issues being pointed out by stakeholders continue to exist they might have a severe impact on the relationship between the two sides to the partnership HPW and LCCH. According to CHP5, what NRSCH does is more micro managing of CHP businesses than regulation. CHP4 explaining how he sees NRSCH used the metaphor “The aim was to produce a thoroughbred and what was created was a camel”.

### **Responses of government stakeholders on SH policy framework**

All 5 government officers interviewed strongly agreed that Housing 2020 policy by previous government is on hold and a preparation of a new policy is underway. Gov1 a senior officer in charge of major SH transfers had following response in relation to the question on the continuity of Housing 2020 policy.

“New government is reviewing previous government’s policies including Housing 2020 policy. So there are no other major transfers to proceed at this stage“

As per above observation, the previous plan to transfer 90% SH to CHPs by 2020 is now on cross roads in less than three years. What this means for SH delivery is that the government administrative mechanism for SH have to continue their role with LRI becoming an exception.

In relation to viability of NRSCH all officers interviewed agreed that if large transfers are to be accomplished, process like NRSCH is vital. Theoretically NRSCH has a safeguard against a defaulting provider by allowing the project to be managed under a statutory manager. However in order to prepare for probable CHP default, project like LRI require more considered risk management strategy than relying on simple provisions in NRSCH. Gov 7 from NRSCH registration section of HPW stressed the process is still in its early days.

Gov3 from Program Development area of the HPW explained Industry Development and Engagement project they are undertaking. In their terminology the term industry means community housing. From the work they are doing it appeared that current government is taking a measured approach in researching (a) actual capacity of CHPs in terms of what they are good at and where they need support (b) in understanding what measures to be taken to engage with them in a meaningful way. Gov3 stated

“It is not only about capacity development, more about guiding the industry towards a sustainable and viable one that is recognized”

This work by current government shows that they are taking a slow and measured approach in developing partnerships with CHPs compared to Housing 2020 policy by previous government. It also explains why the current government is not keen to replicate LRI type transfers.

## **Conclusion**

The conclusions resulting from views expressed by participants will best be summarized under following sub headings (a) LRI planning process (b) State and National Policies (c) Lessons for improving SH in Queensland.

The CHPs were more critical about the adequacy of planning that took place before the announcement of the project compared with their government counterparts. When CHPs used the word planning they seemed to mean the pre-project planning or feasibility of the project. Remarks by CHP1 “elected on day one, in day two, here is the plan” amply clarified this position. In relation to government intension whether it was a stock transfer or a management transfer there had been confusion. It seemed that CHPs believed it to be a stock transfer when it was announced. In relation to planning, the activity that government officers had to deal with seems to be the preparation of tender documents for procuring a CHP consortium. The consultation of stakeholders including tenants as part of project planning was not a priority from the inception.

On the duration of approximately three years, LRI took to select a CHP, all CHPs are of unified view that a management transfer is not very different to outsourcing of work currently undertaken by HPW and therefore the time it took was not justifiable. The lack of experience on the part of government in a transfer like LRI, lengthened the process as per some CHPs. In relation to resources spent on the project,

the view of the CHPs was that experience gained from the participation in the project process is not value for money compared to the resources spent from the sector. it was not possible to quantify exact amount resources spent by government on the project planning however it is indicative that substantial amount of senior management hours together with some input from private sector consultants were to be used in tender process.

The purpose of Housing 2020 policy of the previous conservative government was to provide framework for government to implement projects such as LRI. On the other hand policies such as Housing 2020 became part of a massive public sector reform and reduction. The current labor government seems to be reviewing Housing 2020 policy. In relation to the effect of change of government on the future of LRI project as well as CHP sector in general, the views expressed by CHPs had one commonality. All CHPs agreed that review of Housing 2020 policy was right thing to do. The Housing 2020 aimed to bring CHPs to the frontline as a mainstream service provider in SH. Why CHPs disagreed with that policy position was a paradox that needs further investigation. Part of the answer to this question was derivable from the views expressed by both groups of interviewees. The fact that Housing 2020 envisaged a change that was too heavy, too quick and poor in detail for the sector to bear was the part answer.

In relation to national policy, NRSCH registration process is pivotal to the viability of projects like LRI. As Gov1 put it, "if they lose registration they lose contract." The NRSCH system provides a safeguard against CHP default under registrar's powers where registrar could appoint a statutory manger. What this mean for project like LRI with more than 4700 properties is very much an untested territory. If it means the project will come under HPW again it means changing the management from community housing to public housing. If it means finding another CHP to replace existing one it might involve a complex tender procedure and negotiations as there are only a handful of CHPs in Australia who can undertake projects of this scale. The views of CHPs on the current situation of NRSCH included two major converging points. First point is that there is no national system yet and Victoria and Western Australia has not even signed up. Second point they make is that though Queensland and some other states have signed up to implement NRSCH what is actually happening is a state monopoly and not a state operated national system. Elaborating on the state monopoly they point to how state undertakes all the functions in relation to registration, funding, and planning of Community Housing.

The core message being emerged from the participants from both sides to the SH sector is that readiness of the sector for major overhaul of the SH system in Queensland is Questionable. The government sector as Gov3 explained has a significant role to work closely with CHPs and develop the capacity of the sector. The CHPs while agreeing that the work undertaken to develop capacity of the sector is important, emphasize stop start pattern of SH policy from both governments national and state has impacted their capacity and long term planning.

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Twenty-five years ago, social housing accounted for almost one-third of England's entire housing stock. Since then, mainly because the sales to sitting tenants and demolitions have exceeded new construction, the sector has contracted substantially. However, at the same time, and particularly in the period since 1989, the sector has been undergoing far-reaching restructuring. This paper charts this process focusing, in particular, on developments under the Blair administrations since 1997. The paper discusses the external pressures experienced by social landlords over this period. Such pressures are differentiated between those emanating from central government policy initiatives on the one hand, and from changing housing market conditions on the other. The paper then goes on to analyse the evolving structure of the sector post-1997, the processes that have contributed to this, and the impacts that have resulted.

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