



Social housing exit points, outcomes and future pathways: an administrative data analysis

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Acronyms and abbreviations used in this report

AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited
AIHW	Australian Institute of Health and Welfare
DSS	Department of Social Services
HF	Housing First
HILDA	Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia
OLS	Ordinary Least Squares
PIA	Australian Priority Investment Approach dataset
SURE	Secure Unified Research Environment
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Glossary

A list of definitions for terms commonly used by AHURI is available on the AHURI website www.ahuri.edu.au/research/glossary.

Executive summary

Key points

- The research provides new national evidence on social housing pathways using longitudinal and linked national data.
 - The ‘success’ of a social housing pathway should be judged on relative, rather than definitive terms.
 - Most Australian social housing pathways are stable or involve entry into social housing with subsequent stability.
 - Some pathways are considered transitory, involving multiple moves and changes between tenures.
 - Transitory pathways are associated with more time in receipt of income support and more residential instability. Correspondingly, people with stable social housing pathways spent less time in receipt of income assistance (and were more residentially stable).
-

Key findings

The research provides new national evidence on social housing pathways to assist our understanding of patterns of entry and exit, as well as housing and non-housing outcomes. The analysis is based on two powerful, longitudinal datasets; the Household Income Labour Dynamics in Australia survey (HILDA) and Priority Investment Approach (PIA) datasets. Together, these datasets provide new and valuable insight into: people’s housing pathways through and within social housing tenancies; and residents’ characteristics, experiences and housing pathway outcomes.

The social rented sector (incorporating both public and community housing) plays a pivotal role in meeting the housing needs of people who are retired, disabled, too sick to work, caring for others on a full-time basis, unemployed, or working but with such a low income that accessing market provided housing is not a realistic option. Social housing has variously been described as a ‘springboard’ (Wulff and Newton 1995), ‘a stepping-stone’ (Whelan 2009), and a ‘safety net’ (Powell et al. 2019). Implicit in these conceptualisations is the role of social housing as part of people’s broader housing pathways. While people may move in and out of different tenures, the pattern over time can be regarded as their housing ‘pathway’ (as compellingly described by Clapham 2005).

Much policy and research discussion implicitly characterises social housing pathways as either ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’. Successful social housing pathways are often assumed to involve both an exit from social housing, and subsequent stability in either the private rental sector or home ownership. Correspondingly, unsuccessful social housing pathways may be conceived to involve either no exit from social housing, or an exit to another tenure, but a later return to social housing. Because so little is known about the social housing pathways that Australians follow, or the outcomes of those pathways, these characterisations of ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ pathways are contestable, and thus need to be re-examined.

Like all tenures, people move into and out of Australian social housing over time in response to changes in their housing requirements, household factors, employment, income, and needs. The most common tenure pathway to social housing is from private rental, but a number of social housing tenants also become home owners and enter other tenure types (such as employer provided housing). Correspondingly, a sizeable proportion of social housing tenants leave the tenure each year, to be housed in private rental, owner occupation, and other tenures. Reasons for moving data also suggests that regardless of tenure, lower income Australians move for remarkably similar reasons.

The success of the pathway should be judged not simply in terms of the pattern of housing occupancy, but in terms of the degree to which it meets the individual needs of the person housed. For many people, an unstable pathway may be a successful outcome. It can indicate that the safety net of social housing is no longer required (such as when a person enters full-time employment or secures home ownership). Similarly, a stable social housing pathway may be protective, providing affordable and secure housing to people unable to maintain a traditional tenancy.

Over 15 years, and for an estimated 10 million Australians, the PIA dataset allows us to define seven major entry and exit typologies for people who spent some time in social housing (and a comparison group of people who spent no time in social housing). The seven typologies are:

- The *Stable social tenant* cohort represented the most common pathway. This group had a notably higher average age than any other pathway cohort.
- The *Leavers* cohort was, on average, 10 years younger (mean age 50 years) than the *Stable social tenant* cohort, and Indigenous people were over-represented in this cohort.
- The *New tenant* cohort was, on average, younger than both the *Stable social tenant* cohort and the *Leavers* cohort (mean age 48 years). Compared to almost every pathway type, the *New tenant* cohort had high comparative proportions of refugees, and people born overseas.
- The majority of the *Brief leaver* cohort was born in Australia (77%). A relatively small proportion of the cohort was refugees (2%), and Indigenous people were over-represented (accounting for almost 24% of the cohort).
- The *Brief entrants* cohort was, on average, the youngest, with a mean age of 40 years. It was also the most gender balanced cohort, with 48 per cent being male.
- The two cohorts classified as Transitional—*Transitional leavers* and *Transitional entrants*—were noticeably similar. Both shared a dominance of Australian born people (87% in both cohorts), and a relative under-representation of refugees.

Compared to people who spent no time in social housing, people who were in stable social housing over the entire period spent, on average, 53 per cent more time in receipt of welfare benefits. The stability of the social housing trajectory that people experienced was also important. On average, more transitional pathways were associated with longer periods of welfare receipt.

The ability provided by linked administrative and longitudinal datasets to following people over time, and in different housing situations, is valuable. Our analysis highlights the relative stability of many social housing renters. Those who do move however, generally move to tenures associated with less residential security—the private rented sector and informal renting. A very small proportion transition to home ownership. The findings also highlight substantial differences between tenants on different pathway types, suggesting that some tenant characteristics (such as labour force participation, disability, or Indigenous status) predispose people to more or less stability within and outside of the sector. In examining the characteristics of ‘successful’ social housing pathways, the analyses contained in this research highlight both

considerable state and territory variation, as well as a relationship between transitory pathways and longer time in receipt of welfare benefits.

Policy priorities in the light of a pathways approach

Looking at social housing pathways over time adds to the complexity of understanding and provides much deeper insight into successful and unsuccessful outcomes. Conceptually and operationally, a focus on housing pathways provides a challenge to policy development, necessitating a 'long view' from people's past to their future. This 'long view' has, to date, been difficult to both capture and assemble evidence on. This research has occurred at a time of (and partially as a consequence of) enhanced data access and methodological advance, which enable this 'long view' to be straightforwardly captured. Continued improvements to data access, especially to large, linked administrative data will no doubt drive policy based on 'long view' analysis.

The policy impetus to understand social housing pathways in greater depth reflects the escalating pressures on the sector. Given that very few social rented dwelling completions occur each year in Australia, turnover of the existing stock represents the only realistic mechanism for ensuring that this scarce resource is appropriately and efficiently allocated to individuals, and their households, with the greatest need.

The gradual move towards fixed-term tenancies, and stricter, more frequent checks on income eligibility, can be seen as preliminary policy steps in a new direction. Under this direction, social tenancies increasingly become a stricter safety net for shorter periods of eligibility, sufficient for tenants to springboard into alternative housing arrangements. Such policy options are likely to involve greater scrutiny on engagement in training, education and labour market programs.

Thus, from a policy perspective, an alternative set of inter-linked questions to the four research questions pursued in this study might be posed:

- Under what circumstances can early exits from social renting be safely encouraged, and for which individuals and their households?
- What is the potential for freeing up scarce social rented housing opportunities by taking this approach?
- Do the economic costs and benefits from such a policy justify it, and for which groups of individuals is this true?
- For which groups of individuals is it more cost effective (in the sense of 'economic' rather than 'financial' cost) to avoid early exits from social rented housing?

This set of policy research questions reflects the reality that not all exits (let alone early exits) from social rented housing end in positive outcomes for individuals, their households, or the public purse. The research presented in this report reveals some preliminary insights pertinent to these questions.

From a policy perspective, the social housing sector is undergoing rapid change in the wake of a shortage of housing stock to meet demand, rapid population growth in Australia (particularly in our cities), and the increased cost of renting in the private market or purchasing a home. However, the evidence on which to best respond to these challenges is inconsistent, difficult to generalise across jurisdictions, and sometimes non-existent. Social housing exits may be beneficial for some people. However, as research has not kept pace with policy change, we lack sufficient robust evidence on which to frame successful exits, as well as position tenants for successful longer-term pathways that may include stable social housing. In response to this, we have focussed this research on nationally applicable, longitudinal, and administrative datasets

that can provide timely evidence and allow us to look at both transitions (short run) and pathways (long run) over time.

About the research

This research was conducted as a stand-alone project, *Social Housing Exits, Outcomes and Future Pathways: an administrative data analysis*. The research aimed to provide a new national evidence-base on social housing pathways to assist our understanding of patterns of entry and exit, and housing and non-housing outcomes. This work was motivated by an acknowledgement of generational change in the provision of social housing and broader welfare reform across Australian jurisdictions.

Social housing provision is changing in Australia. It is increasingly targeted at people with high needs; lifetime tenure is no longer an expectation of providers or tenants, and very low-income households are increasingly likely to be housed in the private rental sector (with assistance). At the same time, our nation's homelessness problem is creating an urgent need for policy reform across the sector. A recent Productivity Commission Inquiry into reforms of Human Services highlighted social housing tenants as a key potential beneficiary of "well-designed reforms, underpinned by strong government stewardship" (Productivity Commission 2016, p. 2). These reforms require a solid base of new evidence.

This analysis aims to contribute new knowledge of contemporary pathways into, within, and out of social housing tenancies. To develop this evidence in a timely way, this study is based upon two powerful, longitudinal datasets; the Household Income Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey, and Priority Investment Approach (PIA) datasets.

Together, these datasets provide new and valuable insight into: people's housing pathways through, and within, social housing tenancies; and residents' characteristics, experiences, and their housing pathway outcomes. Using the HILDA and PIA datasets, the first analytical chapter identifies key pathway cohorts, their characteristics, exit experiences and welfare outcomes. The nationally representative HILDA dataset collects information on the economic, wellbeing, labour market, and family life conditions of approximately 17,000 Australian households annually. The PIA administrative dataset contains quarterly information on the interactions of approximately 10 million Australians with Government services.

An additional component of the research assesses the access, potential, and use of large linked administrative data across state and territory boundaries, and between governments, for housing and urban research. This is reported in a separate AHURI Discussion Paper.

1 Introduction

This research occurs at a time when a heightened policy interest in social housing outcomes has converged with increased availability of the ‘big data’ required to understand those outcomes. Over recent decades, the role of social housing has been gradually changing in Australia. It is increasingly seen by governments and many tenants as just one part (be it a safety net, stepping-stone, or springboard) of tenant’s broader housing pathways. This expanded view of social housing necessitates a new evidence-base that can, over time, look to understand people’s housing pathways, including which pathways are beneficial, which pathways are not, and for whom.

Chapter one introduces the policy and housing system context for this research. It highlights the contemporary challenge for policy of how to allocate (and reallocate) a small stock of social housing so as to maximise successful long-term outcomes for a growing high-needs population. The chapter concludes with a discussion of the data used and methods applied.

Chapter two details the results of a series of analyses using longitudinal and ‘big data’ to:

- Understand patterns of entry into, and exit from, Australian social housing.
- Develop a typology of key social housing pathways and an evidence-base of who takes these pathways.
- Consider what successful pathways might look like, and for whom.

The concluding chapter reflects on the evidence-base built in this research and considers the policy implications.

1.1 Why this research was conducted

The social rented housing sector represents a relatively small part of Australia’s housing stock (currently just over 4%, SCRGs 2019), and it has steadily declined in size relative to the other main tenures, at the same time as broader population and dwelling stock growth. However, the social rented sector plays a pivotal role in meeting the housing needs of people who are retired, disabled, too sick to work, caring for others on a full-time basis, unemployed, or working but with such a low income that accessing market provided housing is not a realistic option. Social housing has variously been described as a ‘springboard’ (Wulff and Newton 1995), ‘a stepping-stone’ (Whelan 2009) and a ‘safety net’ (Powell et al. 2019). Implicit in these conceptualisations is the role of social housing as *part* of people’s broader housing pathways. While people may move (‘transition’) in and out of different tenures, the pattern over time can be regarded as their housing ‘pathway’ (as compellingly described by Clapham, 2005).

Some policy and research discussion implicitly characterise social housing pathways as either ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’. Successful social housing pathways are often assumed to involve both an exit from social housing, and subsequent stability in either the private rental sector or home ownership. Correspondingly, unsuccessful social housing pathways may be conceived as

involving either no exit from social housing, or an exit to another tenure, but a later return to social housing. Because so little is known about the social housing pathways that Australians take, or the outcomes of those pathways, these characterisations of ‘successful’ and ‘unsuccessful’ pathways need to be re-examined (and perhaps contested).

Relatively little is actually known about the key events, circumstances or drivers of successful social housing pathways. Even less—bordering on nothing—is known about the possible negative impacts of unsuccessful exits on individuals and their households (family members). We can conjecture that some individuals whose housing circumstances change (including location) may suffer financial, economic, or health related consequences of their instability. There may also be indirect impacts on other household members—notably children growing up in unstable housing circumstances. But, for some people, an exit from social housing, or even an apparently unstable pathway of exit and re-entry into social housing, may actually be interpreted as a successful outcome, where the safety net of social housing is able to protect an individual. The evidence-base on which to assess these hypotheses is currently very thin. In this context, policy has two challenges:

- The need to conceptualise and define successful and unsuccessful social housing pathways.
- The need for research-informed policy that can assist in the redistribution of scarce resources to those that are most in need.

Ideally, researchers would have the ability to directly observe the impacts of housing policy interventions on housing, employment, and education pathways, and then advise policy makers accordingly. Although Australia is fortunate to have a rich legacy of housing related datasets, many of which have been devised or collected through AHURI-funded research, those datasets do not allow us to make observations about individuals’ lives alongside their housing circumstances. For this reason, this project set out to explore the potential for harnessing the benefits of linking administrative datasets including, but not restricted to, housing data.

This report aims to contribute to our understanding of social housing pathways. It is guided by four research questions:

- 1 What is the nature of the principal social housing pathways (into, within, and out of social housing), and what are the experiences of tenants on these pathways?
- 2 Under what circumstances are pathways out of social housing considered unlikely to succeed?
- 3 Are some groups within the tenant population more (or less) likely to establish successful social housing pathways?
- 4 What happens once tenants exit social housing? What is known about those who subsequently re-enter, those who move to private rental housing, and those who enter home ownership?

1.2 Why examine social housing pathways?: a policy context

Although less extensive and entrenched than in many other developed countries, social housing has historically played an important role in meeting the minimum housing needs of Australia’s lowest income and most vulnerable households. In 2009, 328,736 households were living in public housing, but within a decade, this number had fallen to 304,532 (SCRGS, 2019). This fall was more than matched by a substantial increase in the size of the community housing sector, resulting in an overall increase in the size of the social housing sector.

It is also undoubtedly the case that Australia is a fast-moving country in terms of its population and demographic change. Between 2001 and 2019, the population grew by more than 30 per cent, of which around 40 per cent represented natural increase, and almost 60 per cent resulted from net overseas migration (ABS 2019). These trends tend to compound the appearance of decline in the social rented sector—many other developed countries ceased to invest in social rented housing in any major way after the 1970s but, with their more stable populations, the impression is of a slower decline in the sector. For example, between 1991 and 2015, the United Kingdom (UK) built 740,000 social rented dwellings, equivalent to 1.3 per cent of the 1991 population, while Australia built 131,000, equivalent to 0.78 per cent of the 1991 population. Meanwhile, net migration to the UK and Australia over this period totalled 4.26 million and 3.60 million respectively, or 7.4 per cent of the 1991 population in the case of the UK, but 21.4 per cent of Australia's population over the same time period.

Social housing, comprising the public and community housing sectors, is becoming scarcer in Australia, and the pressures on the sector are growing. Recent AHURI-funded research revealed that the number of households without the financial means to meet their housing needs through market-provided housing is likely to increase from 1.3 million to approximately 1.7 million, by 2025 (Rowley et al. 2017).

1.2.1 The policy emergence of a focus on exits

The policy context of this research report is therefore a nexus of decline in the *relative* size of the social rented sector, declining levels of affordability in market-provided housing, and relatively rapid population growth. In many other international contexts, supply arrives both from new build and from turn-over of existing stock. Wiesel and Pawson (2015) summarise the key policy drivers succinctly. They suggest that the very low volume of new social housing stock being produced means that some social housing exits are the only effective mechanism for ensuring that scarce social housing stock is allocated to new households in the greatest need.

This is the main reason for policy interest in the turn-over of existing stock (through tenants' transition out of the sector). Examples of policy levers that can be considered to encourage people to transition out of social housing, enabling turnover, include the move towards fixed-term tenancies, closer or more regular scrutiny of income, or perhaps requiring tenants to be involved in labour market programs. Wiesel and Pawson (2015) also highlight that relatively little is known about why, given the affordability and security benefits of social housing, tenants leave, noting that the proportion leaving the sector each year is only around 5 per cent.

1.2.2 Barriers to exit

Wiesel and Pawson's (2015) research suggests that the general unaffordability of housing and insecurity of private tenancies are key contributing factors to the reluctance of tenants to exit social housing. They found less evidence in support of the notion that social rented housing acts as a trap per se. For example, their interviewees who were living in social rented housing, but paying market rents, did not express strong motivation to leave the sector. Interviewees alluded to employment security or private sector rental insecurity as reasons for this. For instance, several other studies have found that around one-third of public housing tenants exiting the system later re-enter it, sometimes having experienced housing instability, including repeated moving between tenancies, running up debts and homelessness (Seelig et al. 2008).

In very recent AHURI-funded research, Powell et al. (2019) concluded that the lack of affordable alternatives represented the most serious barrier impeding moves out of social rented housing. Indeed, Wiesel and Pawson (2015) suggested two main policy responses that may facilitate exits, including re-establishing the National Rental Affordability Scheme, and consideration of home ownership schemes including shared equity models. However, Wiesel and Pawson (2015) also acknowledged that the differential in housing costs between social renting and

home ownership has become so large as to undermine the feasibility for home ownership subsidy solutions. They went on to argue that using fixed-term tenancies to force exits for social tenants with labour market income could be counter-productive, and that encouraging employed tenants to remain in the sector would yield a higher rental income dividend for social housing providers.

1.2.3 Policy implications

From a policy perspective, the social housing sector is undergoing rapid change in the wake of a shortage of housing stock to meet demand, rapid population growth in Australia (particularly in our cities), and increased costs of renting in the private market or purchasing a home. However, the evidence on which to best respond to these challenges is inconsistent, difficult to generalise across jurisdictions and sometimes non-existent. Social housing exits may be beneficial for some people. However, as research has not kept pace with policy change, we lack sufficient robust evidence on which to frame successful exits, as well as position tenants for successful longer-term pathways that may include stable social housing. In response to this, we have focussed this research on nationally applicable, longitudinal and administrative datasets that can provide timely evidence and allow us to look at both transitions (short-run) and pathways (long-run) over time.

1.3 What we know about entry, exit and outcomes

Since the important early work of Wulff and Newton (1995) there has been a continuing interest within the research community in the mobility of social and public tenants within, into, and out of the sector. As the previous section has described, social, population and housing market change has, in recent years, focussed particular interest onto the patterns of mobility, as well as the circumstances of social housing exit, social housing pathways and consequences. This brief review of the existing research base will discuss these major themes in the evidence-base.

1.3.1 Mobility—entry and exit

Work on social housing exits also sits within a broader literature on residential mobility (e.g. for a comprehensive review of conceptualisations of residential mobility see Baker 2002). The mobility literature conceptualises social housing residents' moves as the same as that of residents within the private rental sector or home ownership, but with greater constraints on their mobility decision making processes. For example, social housing tenants are more likely to make residential moves that are induced, forced, or constrained, and 'push' factors are likely to be stronger than 'pull' factors (Baker 2002; Wulff and Newton 1995). The issue of constraint is common in studies of the relocation behaviour of social housing tenants, and it often manifests in social housing tenants moving longer distances to secure social housing or relocate within it. The early UK-based study by Kintrea and Clapham (1986) explored social housing tenant mobility distances (preferred and actual), and the reasons given for mobility. They found that tenants preferred much shorter moves, but in order to secure a tenancy, they moved greater distances than their expressed preference. This finding was mirrored in Australia by Kendig (1981), who found that social tenants moved on average 12 kilometres to relocate, a distance that was greater than average mobility distances at the time.

Vacancy statistics provide us with insight into the relative mobility of tenants within the social housing sector. As discussed above, vacancy rates are very low, with approximately 4 per cent of tenancies ending per year (AIHW 2018). This suggests that, currently, few people move within the sector, and even fewer exit. The issue of declining exits from social housing tenancies is a relatively well-noted phenomena, even while the consequences might not yet be well understood. The small size of Australia's social housing stock, combined with allocation procedures that prioritise residents with high and complex needs, means that social housing is,

in practice, a welfare safety net, or in its most critical form, an 'ambulance service' (Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2014), rather than a tenure of choice (Wiesel and Pawson 2015). With very low rates of new social housing and tenancies increasingly sustained into older age, the primary means of servicing the high demand for social housing units is through vacancies. These conditions encourage a policy view of a 'successful' social housing pathway as resulting in an exit, rather than stability within the social housing sector (Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2014).

There is relatively modest Australian literature on the circumstances of people who enter or exit social housing. AHURI-commissioned projects led by Wiesel (2012; 2014) comprise the bulk of existing Australian work. Looking to the international literature, evidence from the UK, US and Canada (e.g. studies by Pawson and colleagues in the UK in 2000 and 2009) is informative to a limited extent, given the different context of the research.

1.3.2 Who moves?

It should be noted that there is a sizeable body of literature focussed on the benefits of entry into social housing. Early AHURI research by Phibbs and Young (2005), for example, reported that some entrants to public housing used the housing cost savings to reduce their employment level and, furthermore, that tenants were generally aware that one benefit of reducing employment was a reduction in rent. Reasons for reducing employment included taking on additional care responsibilities and commencing training. Some respondents reported greater interest in career development, while others reported having established a small business. They reported significant improvements in the educational performance levels of children following moves into public housing. Dockery et al. (2010) suggested that moving into public housing had a significant effect on the probability of moving into employment (11% for males and 5% for females).

Existing research shows that those who stay in social housing tend to be older, have a disability or long-term health condition, or are lone person households. For example, Whelan (2009) uses administrative data from the Western Australian Department of Housing and Works on public housing applicants during 1999–05 to generate hazard and survivor functions for tenancy sustainment in public housing. The author finds that lone parent and single person households spend longer in public housing than couple households, that most tenants combine employment income with government income support (and low earnings / high income support are associated with longer tenancies), and that residents are more likely to stay in public housing when rental payments are markedly lower than market rates. Findings are mixed as to whether there is a duration dependence between length of tenure and likelihood of exiting. In the Australian context, Wiesel et al. (2014) find that an increasing length of tenancy is associated with decreasing likelihood of an exit. Earlier work from the US finds no duration dependence (Hungerford 1996). Interestingly though, this US work reports similar demographics patterns among those who stay only briefly, and those receiving housing assistance for longer periods, including the elderly and disabled (Hungerford 1996).

Wiesel et al. (2012; 2014) provide the most comprehensive snapshot of exiting tenants' characteristics in Australia to-date. Based on 60 in-depth interviews with recently housed social tenants, they report that, in particular, recent immigrants and single mothers expressed a belief that their tenancy was only temporary, and desired to end the tenancy once they were established or relieved of caring duties. However, the work was unable to confirm whether this desire translated into actual exits (Wiesel et al. 2012). In 2014, Wiesel and colleagues reported that exiting households are increasingly lone parents, not in the labour force, and of non-English speaking backgrounds exiting into private rental tenancies (based on analysis of HILDA waves 2 and 10). Taken at face value, these trends suggest that many exits are likely to be precarious, particularly because of financial insecurity due to lack of employment, caring responsibilities and language or cultural barriers.

As above, these patterns appear to be reflected in work from the UK and US. For instance, Pawson and Bramley (2000) draw on data from respondents either in owner-occupation or private rental after vacating a social housing tenancy in the prior two years (from the Survey of English Housing 1995–96), and find that people exiting social housing tended to be younger, couples with or without dependent children, in full-time or part-time employment, less likely to have a disability, and more likely to be a student. Similarly, Hungerford (1996) found that people exiting after only brief tenancies tended to be younger and more ‘job ready’.

1.3.3 Why do people enter, leave, or stay?

Social housing can provide both security and affordability for low-income households. These two qualities are the most widely cited reasons for entering into and sustaining a social housing tenancy. Mee’s (2007) survey of 213 public housing residents in Newcastle in New South Wales exemplified these drivers, finding that unaffordability in the private rental market, the relatively lower rent available in the public sector, and security of tenure were the most regularly reported reasons for entering public housing. They also remained important reasons for residents’ sustainment of tenancies (Wiesel et al. 2012; 2014). Security of tenure appears to be particularly important in residents’ decision to remain in social housing; for example, providing a safety net against shocks such as job loss (Wiesel and Pawson 2015) and relationship dissolution (Wiesel 2014).

For the small proportion of residents exiting social housing every year, the benefits of affordability and security may be outweighed by other housing or household requirements. Motivation for ending a tenancy can include housing (size, condition, location), neighbourhood (amenities, employment opportunities, neighbours), familial (caring responsibilities, relationship formation), and financial (rent arrears, other more affordable accommodation, receipt of inheritance or superannuation) reasons. Wiesel et al. (2014) categorise these as ‘push’ or ‘pull’ factors based on their analysis of 95 in-depth interviews with current, re-entered, and former public housing tenants in New South Wales and Victoria. They suggest that push factors that motivated a residential move were often related to: neighbours; perceived safety within the neighbourhood; and problems with a dwelling (such as size). While these push factors alone may not have necessarily resulted in an exit from social housing, the additional inability of tenants to relocate to a more appropriate dwelling within the social housing stock often resulted in people leaving the sector. The same study describes choice-based reasons for exit in terms of ‘pull’ factors. Common examples of these are household formation or consolidation (for example creating a new household with a new partner or moving back in with parents to save for a house deposit), or a move directly to home ownership.

1.3.4 What happens when people exit?

Residents who exit social housing transition to other tenures with varying degrees of stability, moving to the private rental market or home ownership, either permanently or temporarily. Few studies report on the outcomes (e.g. across employment, education, or wellbeing) of former social housing residents. Methodology, and in particular accessing appropriate data, is a critical factor in the challenge of such work; this is discussed in more depth in a later section. The work by Wiesel et al. (2014) offers some insight into former social housing residents’ outcomes. They find that most tenants were happy with their decision to exit public housing, and reported benefits to their housing, health, relationships and overall quality of life. However, these qualitative findings are in contrast to the results of an analysis of self-assessed health and financial wellbeing at the point of exit, and then eight years later using data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey by the same authors. In it, they found that tenants had poorer outcomes at the second time point across both self-assessed health, and their ability to raise money in an emergency (a common measure of financial wellbeing and social capital) (Wiesel et al. 2014: 24).

The recent work by Bentley et al. (2018) followed social housing tenants and their entry and exit pathways over 13 annual waves of a longitudinal dataset. The work used marginal structural models to estimate the cumulative health effect of years in social housing, and tenure stability, comparing them to a like cohort in other tenures. This work showed that, over and above the effect of individual characteristics and circumstances, there was evidence of a cumulative negative mental health effect of each year spent in social housing. Importantly, the worst mental health outcomes were observed for people who made multiple transitions into and out of social housing. This finding suggests that stability in social housing is protective, and that a key positive outcome for people who need social housing is tenure security within the sector.

In examining the enabling conditions for social housing exits, particular attention in the literature is given to paid employment as an enabling factor for residents to enter the private rental market (and in some cases, home ownership). However, research has found that paid employment does not necessarily always act as an enabler—even if residents are paying full market rent in their public tenancy—because of the security offered by social housing and its ability to act as a safety net in case of job loss (Wiesel and Pawson 2015; Wiesel et al. 2014). This is also reflected in Robinson's (2012) examination (based on ~150 interviews with social housing residents) of the relationship between social housing 'dependence' and participation in the labour force in light of policy discourse and reforms in England. Robinson concluded this study with the observation that there was no evidence that social housing provided a disincentive to work. Further, Robinson suggested that the actions of social landlords potentially assisted some tenants to participate in the workforce.

Cigdem-Bayram et al. (2017) carried out empirical work designed to test the notion of a 'welfare lock-in', where people on public housing waiting lists may maintain their income below a threshold in order to remain eligible. Yet, their empirical work found that housing assistance to private rental and public housing tenants has a negligible impact on employment. Specifically, removing Commonwealth Rent Assistance would only reduce the probability of continued employment by 0.3 percentage points.

Many of the studies referenced above reflect on the policy and service contexts of sustainable and unsustainable social housing exits. Wiesel et al. (2014) discuss various policy mechanisms to assist tenant exits, including Western Australia's Rental Pathways Scheme, which supports tenants to move from social to private rental housing. In concluding their discussion, Wiesel et al. (2014) suggest that income-related rent rates may act as a disincentive for some tenants to seek paid employment, or exit their public housing tenancy. As such, focus should be given to improving security in the private rental sector, or providing opportunities to transition through affordable housing managed by community housing providers, low-income home ownership models or community-led housing models. Li et al. (2017) also conclude that gradually raising rents to market level may incentivise some tenants to exit. However, this raises clear concerns with applying undue stress on vulnerable households.

Other authors comment more broadly on the range of supportive services that residents may require after exiting social housing (Anderson-Baron and Collins 2018; Dantzler and Rivera 2019; Pawson and Munro 2009). Two studies, one from the US and one from Canada, raise particularly relevant points. Anderson-Baron and Collins (2018) conducted semi-structured and biographical life history interviews with service providers (29) and service users (16) of three different Housing First (HF) programs in Canada. These programs, to varying degrees, expect participants to 'graduate' from their services. Graduation in this context can be likened to an enforced exit from housing assistance (and complementary) services. The authors found that many participants did not have the capacity to sustain their tenancies without assistance and ended up, once again, homeless and reapplying for HF (issues included mental health problems, loss of employment, and navigation of complex administrative requirements without assistance). The interviews with service providers found that clients of HF programs often

needed support indefinitely, demonstrating that ‘exiting’ or ‘graduating’ is not a realistic expectation in this case. Dantzler and Rivera (2019) examine mobility intentions—and subsequent relocation—among a cohort of public housing tenants in the US using the Panel Survey of Income Dynamics dataset 1987–2013, augmented with the restricted Assisted Housing Data (n=3,066). The authors conclude that intention to move has some effect on actual mobility, but that policy has a strong effect on the odds of exiting. But in discussion of alternative forms of housing assistance, the authors note that the replacement of public housing with housing vouchers may result in negative outcomes because of ‘diverse forms of rental discrimination’ within the private sector for residents using housing vouchers.

A very recent paper from Parsell et al. (2019) presents an evaluation of an integrated social housing, and health and psychological services program in Brisbane. The project targeted tenants who were at risk of eviction and developed ‘Housing Support Programs’ (including services such as counselling, family and carer assistance and job seeking) aimed at assisting residents sustain their tenancies. The authors reported increased tenancy stability, improved health, and decreased emergency service usage for those involved in the program, highlighting the importance of social housing as a conduit or location for non-housing support services.

1.3.5 A note about data

Research dealing with social housing exits, housing trajectories and former tenants’ outcomes is challenging, primarily due to data and access limitations (as for example described in Bernet et al. 2015). In Australia, most studies draw on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with tenants or service providers (Wiesel et al. 2012; 2014), tenant surveys (Mee 2007; Wiesel et al. 2014), or household panel data (i.e. HILDA) (Bentley et al. 2018; Wiesel et al. 2014). While the importance of administrative data is noted by many Australian and international researchers (Li et al. 2017; Spallek et al. 2018), and there is some recent Australian (for example Parsell et al. 2019; Whelan 2009), and international work (for example Dantzler and Rivera’s 2019 study using household panel data), the use of linked administrative data to understand housing issues is limited in Australia.

1.4 The research

This project piloted the use of large, linked administrative data for housing and urban focussed research with a view to improving our understanding of Australian social housing trajectories and outcomes. As our literature review has highlighted, administrative data provides great promise for understanding, and responding to, housing problems in Australia. But the fact that few Australian studies have been undertaken to date is a reflection of a data infrastructure (and protocols and tools for access and provision) in its infancy.

1.4.1 Data and methods

This analysis utilises a combination of administrative and panel data; the analysis of each progressively adding to our understanding Australian social housing pathways and outcomes.

Two datasets were analysed:

- 1** The Household Income Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) dataset. A household-based panel study that has collected annual information (economic, wellbeing, labour market and family life) on more than 17,000 individuals throughout this century. This dataset, being nationally representative, allows us to examine social housing in the context of the wider housing system, and to explore the experiences of people once they leave the social housing sector. Further, it allows us to consider both households and individuals, and examine self-reported reasons for moving (routinely collected in HILDA when someone moves house).

- 2 Priority Investment Approach (PIA) dataset. This is a national actuarial dataset that allows us to track each individual interaction with government services (Department of Human Services) over time. This dataset has over 260 million observations of quarterly information on Australians in contact with government services. The scale of this dataset allows for the development of more detailed and nuanced descriptions of pathways in the social housing sector than is possible with the HILDA dataset. While it is not nationally representative, and does not allow the analytical clustering of individuals within households, it is richer in terms of the information available on people’s service use. Further, the large size of the dataset allows us to look robustly at the subgroups of interest.

To answer our research questions, a series of analyses are applied to these data.

Table 1: Use and analysis of the Household Income Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) dataset

Dataset	Analysis	Brief description of analysis undertaken
HILDA	An initial profile of entries and exits	Descriptive analysis of five consecutive annual waves of a representative dataset. Count of people entering and exiting social housing. Analysis of reasons for moving.
	Describing lower income Australians: social housing pathways	Pooled analysis of 15 annual data waves of a representative dataset. Classification of lower income sample population into simple social housing pathway cohorts: 1 no time 2 some time 3 continuously housed in social housing. Socio-demographic characteristics of each cohort is described.
	An initial social housing pathway typology	Entry and exit analysis of 16 annual waves of a representative dataset. Restricted to people who had exposure to social housing. Classification of people’s entry and exit patterns as stable, entered, exited, or changers.

Source: Authors.

HILDA is a nationally representative longitudinal survey that commenced in 2001. The dataset contains information of every member of the household whose age was 15. Initially, there were approximately 17,000 person-observations in each year of data; from 2011 the sample sizes increased to over 23,000 person-observations due to the inclusion of a top-up sample in 2011. As a starting point, analysis focussed on individuals who responded to the survey from 2011 onwards to provide an initial profile of people entering and exiting social housing. Then, pooled analysis of 16 annual data waves were used to (1) describe social housing pathways that low-income Australians were facing; and (2) capture an initial social housing pathway typology (i.e. entry and exit patterns).

Table 2: Use and analysis of the Priority Investment Approach (PIA) dataset

Data set	Analysis	Brief description of analysis undertaken
PIA	A linked administrative data social housing pathways typology	Pathways analysis using 15 years (~10 million person observations) of data. The prevalence of each pathway cohort is derived. <hr/> Socio-demographic characteristics of each pathway cohort is described. <hr/> Analysis of selected outcomes (time in receipt of welfare and residential stability) for each pathway cohort.

Source: Authors.

The PIA dataset contains approximately 260 million observations associated with receipt of government income support over 56 quarters between 2001 and 2015¹. Analysis was restricted to persons aged over 15 years.

Econometric models were undertaken as part of the outcomes analysis. Each was adjusted for social housing tenant demographic characteristics including gender (female/male), Indigenous status of household (primary recipient or their partner Indigenous/no Indigenous household head), refugee status (yes/no), country of birth (born in Australia/born overseas), relationship status at baseline (person single at baseline/not single), age cohort at baseline (20–29 years, 30–55 years or 55+ years), and state or territory of residence at baseline. To adjust for changes in macro-policies and economic environment that individuals were exposed over time, all models included the total number of individuals who changed state. Two outcomes were specified:

- 1 Duration of income benefit receipt.** Represented as the number of quarters that individuals received social benefits. This is a measure of duration and reliance on government income assistance. This includes income benefits related to study, unemployment, disability and age. Rent assistance is not considered an income benefit in this study.
- 2 Residential stability.** Represented as the number of non-local residential moves. This variable was designed to capture relative residential stability. Non-local moves were specified as moves that occurred outside of the local postcode area (i.e. individuals relocated to a new postcode), reflecting moves over longer distances that are more likely to involved disruption to services and social networks and a higher financial cost.

Models were estimated using an Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) regression. The log of each outcome was modelled as a linear function of demographic characteristics, social economic conditions and housing pathway membership. The models are detailed below.

¹ It should be noted that individuals who received no government benefits during this time will not be represented in the dataset. While acknowledging this potential limitation, we also note that, because of its welfare related allocation policies, social housing recipients are highly likely to be included in this dataset.

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(\textit{benefit duration})_i &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \textit{female}_i + \beta_2 \textit{indigenous}_i + \beta_3 \textit{refugee}_i + \beta_4 \textit{country of birth}_i + \beta_5 \textit{single}_{0i} \\ &+ \sum_{g=1}^{g=7} \varphi_g \textit{age group}_{g,0i} + \sum_{s=1}^{s=7} \theta_s \textit{state}_{s,0i} + \sum_p^{p-1} \gamma_p \textit{pathway}_{pi} + \beta_6 \textit{changed state}_i + \vartheta_i \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} \ln(\textit{residential stability})_i &= \beta_0 + \beta_1 \textit{female}_i + \beta_2 \textit{indigenous}_i + \beta_3 \textit{refugee}_i + \beta_4 \textit{country of birth}_i + \beta_5 \textit{single}_{0i} \\ &+ \sum_{g=1}^{g=7} \varphi_g \textit{age group}_{g,0i} + \sum_{s=1}^{s=7} \theta_s \textit{state}_{s,0i} + \sum_p^{p-1} \gamma_p \textit{pathway}_{pi} + \beta_6 \textit{changed state}_i + \vartheta_i \end{aligned}$$

Where, $\ln(\textit{benefit duration})_i$ and $\ln(\textit{residential stability})_i$ are natural logarithm transformations of (i) the total quarters receiving income benefits, (ii) the total number of postcode changes of an individual i between 2001 and 2015. We note that some individuals might have never changed their postcode, or transited into or out of social housing. To avoid creating missing values after the logarithm transformation of 0, which may affect our statistical inference, we use $\ln(1 + \textit{residential stability})_i$ in the regression. Subscript 0 denotes information that was recorded when an individual's housing information first appeared in the PIA dataset.

2 Social housing entries, exits and pathways

- The ‘success’ of a social housing pathway should be judged on relative, rather than definitive, terms.
 - Social housing tenants mainly move to or from private rental tenure.
 - Social housing tenants are ‘movers’ first and ‘social-housing-mover’s second; their reasons for moving house (either within or inside the tenure) are almost identical to those given by people in other tenures.
 - Most social housing pathways are stable or involve entry into social housing.
 - Some pathways are considered transitory, involving multiple moves and changes between tenures.
 - Transitory pathways are associated with more time in receipt of benefits and more residential instability.
 - Compared to people with pathways characterised by moves into and out of social housing, those with stable social housing spent less time in receipt of income assistance.
-

2.1 Towards ‘successful’ social housing pathways

Fundamental to any understanding of successful and unsuccessful social housing pathways, it is necessary to know what the key Australian social housing pathways are, who is predisposed to take those pathways, and where (in terms of outcomes) people end up. This chapter presents a series of these analysis using national data, and their findings. Underlying this work is a small body of literature that is focussed on defining or assessing successful and unsuccessful social housing pathways. Much of the existing peer reviewed and grey literature on social housing and housing careers implicitly or explicitly assumes that people may have successful (or unsuccessful) housing pathways, but what can we take success to mean?

2.1.1 Ends and means

Most broadly, in his highly influential elucidation of a pathways approach to understanding the meaning of housing, Clapham draws us to think of housing as a means to “personal fulfillment” (Clapham 2005: 2). This suggests that a successful housing pathway should be judged on this basis. Reflecting on this work, Beer et al. (2011) suggest that people’s housing careers or pathways are ultimately means to psychological or ontological security. Beer et al.’s work does, however, also suggest that in countries like Australia housing *consumption* through ownership may be seen by many as an ‘end in itself’, suggesting that home ownership is seen by some as a marker of a successful pathway.

2.1.2 Exit as success?

Robinson (2012) and Fitzpatrick and Pawson (2014) both point to a tendency in policy and government literature to measure the success of social housing pathways in terms of the longer-term stability of exit from the sector. Similarly, Wiesel et al. (2012) refer to ‘sustainable’ social housing pathways as occurring when an exit from social housing to ownership or the

private rental sector is 'sustained' and the pathway does not necessitate re-entry into social housing.

2.1.3 Entry as success?

Entry into social housing is also considered as a successful pathway outcome. Early work by Pawson and Munro (2009) highlights the importance of entry into social housing as a successful outcome for people exiting homelessness. The recent work by Parsell et al. (2019) highlights the importance of social housing as a 'conduit' for services, and the sustainability of a social housing tenancy as a successful pathway. This mirrors the suggestion by Mee (2007) that entry into social housing, and subsequent sustainment of the tenancy, signals a successful housing outcome.

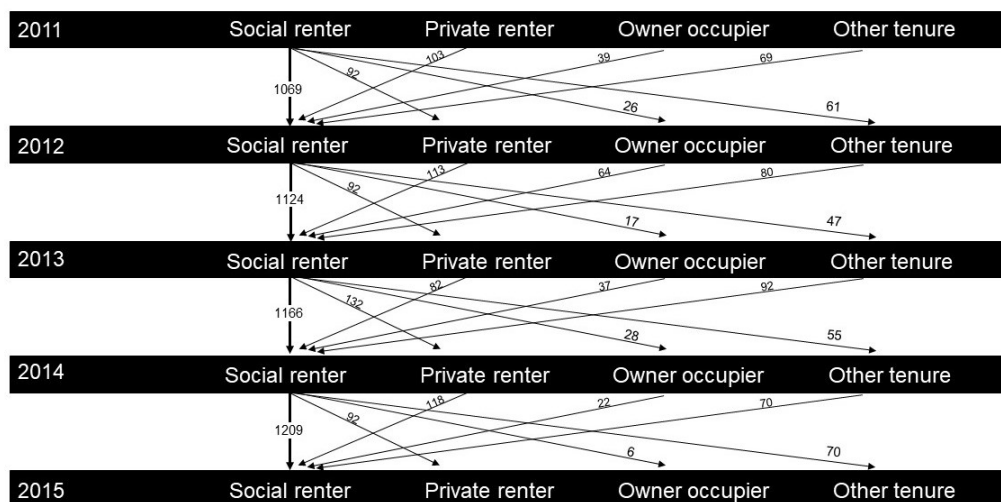
What all of these approaches share is a definition of success that is informed by both, *the extent to which social housing meets the needs of individual tenants, and societal context and expectation*. Both of these aspects support operationalisation of 'success' as a relative, rather than definitive, concept. For this reason, we have taken the following approach:

- 1 considered transitions and short run changes in housing tenure
- 2 considered pathways over time
- 3 explored who makes changes or occupies particular pathways and what their needs are.

2.2 Social housing entries and exits over time

Like all tenures, people move into, and out of, Australian social housing over time in response to changes in their housing requirements, household factors, employment, income and need. A recent study by Bentley et al. (2018) demonstrates the scale of this tenure movement over a five-year period. Using HILDA, Figure 1 shows that while a similar number of people are social renters, each year people move in and out of social housing to and from other tenures. The most common tenure pathway to social housing is from private rental, but a number of social housing tenants also become home owners and enter other tenure types (such as employer provided housing). Correspondingly, a sizeable proportion of social housing tenants leave the tenure each year, to be housed in private rental, owner occupation and other tenures.

Figure 1: Tenure change, all tenures 2011–15

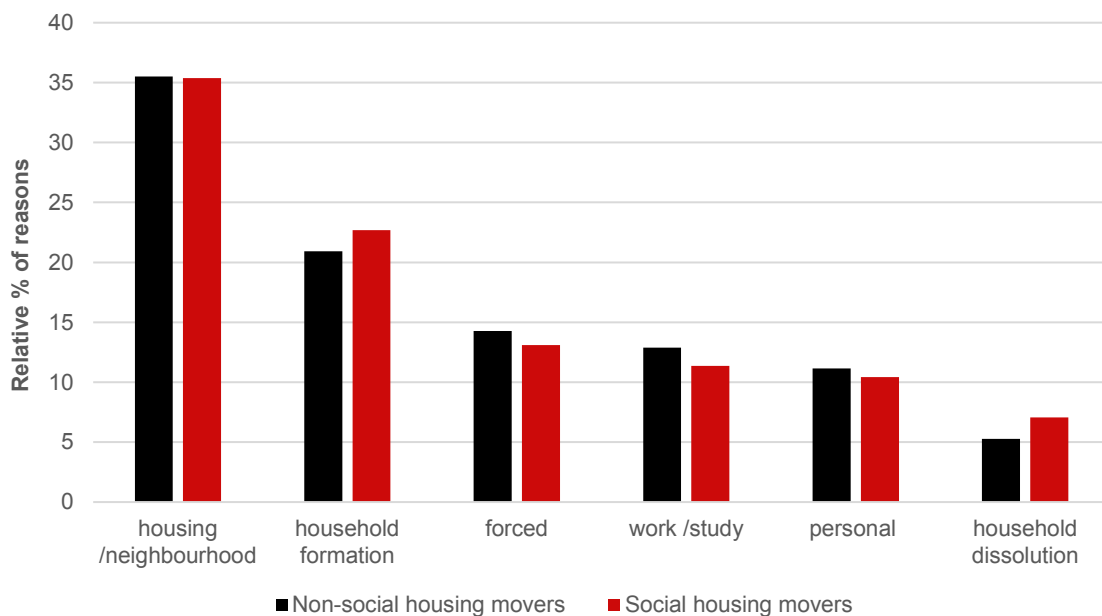


Source: HILDA, adapted from Bentley, Baker, Simons, Simpson and Blakely, 2018

2.3 Why do social housing tenants move?

Across the population, people move house for a variety of well-established reasons, such as to enter home ownership, to enable divorce, or to live closer to work. Not only does the HILDA dataset follow individuals and their households over time, as they enter and exit different tenures, it also asks people to identify their main reasons for moving. This allows us to compare reasons for moving across tenure experiences. In this section, we examine the reasons for moving provided by movers. Reasons for moving of all moves were classified into six groups which were housing or neighbourhood, household formation, forced, work or study, personal and household dissolution. Focussing on a lower income population (lowest 40% of the income distribution), the analysis summarised in Figure 2 shows that housing and locational reasons were most important, followed by those related to household formation (such as 'to get married'). Reasons associated with 'forced' moves (such as 'eviction' and 'property no longer available') were also regularly nominated, followed by work or study, personal and household dissolution (divorce or separation). Of particular interest, the figure compares reasons for moving for social housing movers and non-social housing movers, and suggests that regardless of tenure, lower income households reasons for moving are remarkably similar.

Figure 2: Reasons for moving, comparison of social housing and non-social housing movers



Source: HILDA

2.4 Who enters and exits and who stays?

Given individual circumstances and population characteristics, it is possible that any person within Australia's low-income population may be eligible for or need social housing, either in the short or longer-term. It is also likely that, even among the lower income population, there are substantial compositional differences between the broader lower income population, and both people who remain in social housing for extended periods, and people who may enter or exit social housing for shorter periods.







This brief background analysis uses pooled HILDA data from 2000–01 to 2015–16 to classify lower income Australians (defined as the bottom 40% of the income distribution) by their social

housing exposure pattern. We examine patterns of movement ‘pathways’ during five-year exposure windows. Three pathway defined cohorts are described:

- 1 Lower income Australians who spent no time in social housing.
- 2 Lower income Australians who spent only some time in social housing (one or two, or three or four years cumulatively).
- 3 Lower income Australians who were continuously housed in social housing.

Following earlier published work (Bentley et al. 2018), and to maximise data density, five-year exposure windows were chosen to define these three pathway cohorts. We acknowledge that people’s housing trajectories do, of course, extend across their life course. Five-year exposure windows were selected in order to reflect a period of time that may distinguish tenure stability from instability. We acknowledge that this restrictive definition makes the sample size relatively small. The comparison of population composition differences between the three groups is summarised in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: Descriptive population comparison by level of exposure to social housing

	Lower income Australians who spent no time in social housing (n=12,375)	Lower income Australians who spent only some time in social housing (n=1,100)	Lower income Australians who were continuously housed in social housing (n=855)
Dominant Age Cohort	Older people	Younger people	Working age people
Proportion of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	Low (3%)	Highest (18%)	High (13%)
Proportion who did not complete high school	Lower (<59%) 		Highest (66%)
Proportion born overseas	Similar (range from 24% to 26%) 		
Proportion Not in the Labour Force	Lower (<57%) 		Highest (75%)
Proportion of households lone parent	Lower (12%)	Higher (25%) 	
Proportion of households lone person	Lower (<24%) 		Highest (31%)
Proportion with a disability or long term health condition	Lower (<45%) 		Highest (64%)

Source: HILDA (2000–01 to 2015–16)

Although Figure 3 highlights notable differences between the three pathway cohorts, there are also similarities within this sample. Most interestingly, the cohort characteristics of the group who spent no time in social housing and the group who spent some, but not all of the five years in social housing are similar (across for example, educational, labour force and household structure descriptors). Correspondingly, the continuous social housing cohort was, across most measures, distinct. The population profile of this group was notable in having many of the population characteristics associated with broader disadvantage, such as very low workforce participation levels, a very high proportion of people with disability and illness, and a large majority of people who did not complete high school.

The findings of this descriptive analysis suggest that some groups are especially predisposed to particular social housing pathways. In many ways this is not surprising; allocation policies directly preference people with higher levels of need. But, if this dataset were examined cross-sectionally, rather than longitudinally, people who were classified as being continuously housed in social housing would not be distinguishable from those who were housed for some time but not continuously. The finding that the population characteristics of the two cohorts are so distinct suggests that the process of entering and exiting social housing is highly selective. The findings suggest that, while being continuously housed within the tenure may provide an essential safety net for people who need it most, some people are able to use the safety net temporarily, and those who are most able to exit, do (even if they later return).

For many, an unstable pathway is a successful outcome. This may, for example, indicate that the safety net of social housing is no longer required (for example someone entering full-time employment or securing home ownership). It is only patterns whereby people return to the sector after a relatively short period of time that are concerning. Similarly, a stable social housing pathway may be protective, providing affordable and secure housing to people unable to maintain a traditional tenancy. In this case, stable social housing should be regarded as a successful outcome. So, the success of the pathway should be judged not simply in terms of the pattern of housing occupancy, but in the degree to which it meets the individual needs of the person housed.

2.5 A simple social housing pathway typology

In order to understand the pathways into and out of social housing and the populations that take those pathways in more detail, we analysed the social housing entry and exit patterns of adults in the HILDA dataset across the 16 available annual waves.

Analysis was restricted to individuals who had lived in social housing for some time during the 16 annual waves, and who were present in the dataset for at least two annual waves. This restriction reduced the size of the analytical sample (4,961 observations). Social housing entries and exits were classified into four common pathway typologies:

- **Stable social housing:** individuals who stayed in social housing throughout.
- **Entered social housing:** individuals who moved into social housing from another tenure and stayed for the remainder of the study period.
- **Exited social housing:** individuals who exited social housing and remained out of the tenure (and did not re-enter).
- **Transitional:** individuals who had moved in and out of social housing at least twice.

Across the entire sample, the most common pathway typology was transitional. More than 43 per cent of individuals made two or more moves into or out of social housing during the 16 year analysis window. This was slightly higher than the proportion of individuals classified as having

stable social housing (35%). Almost 15 per cent of people had a pattern of entry (followed by stability) to social housing, and a small proportion (6%) exited social housing.

There was an apparent association between propensity to exit and enter social housing, and gender. Women were more likely than men to have stable social housing pathways. Women were also more likely than men to *enter* social housing. Men, on the other hand, were more likely to have a transitional pattern of multiple entries and exits, or to exit. Entry and exit patterns also correlated with age. The majority of people aged 15–29 years had a transitional pattern of entry and exit. By comparison, people in the main working ages (30–64 years), and those aged 65–74 years had stable pathway trajectories. While a sizeable proportion of older (aged 75 years or more) people entered social housing during the 16 years (34%), many also experienced transitional trajectories, entering and exiting social housing. Unsurprisingly, given that people contained in this analysis were at some time eligible for, and housed within, social housing, the income distribution across all pathways is concentrated in the lower end of the distribution. Figure 4 suggests that people classified as having a stable social housing trajectory, and those who entered social housing, were especially concentrated within the lower income quintiles. People with transitional or exit pathways were strikingly similar to each other in their income profile, with a relatively even distribution across the income quintiles.

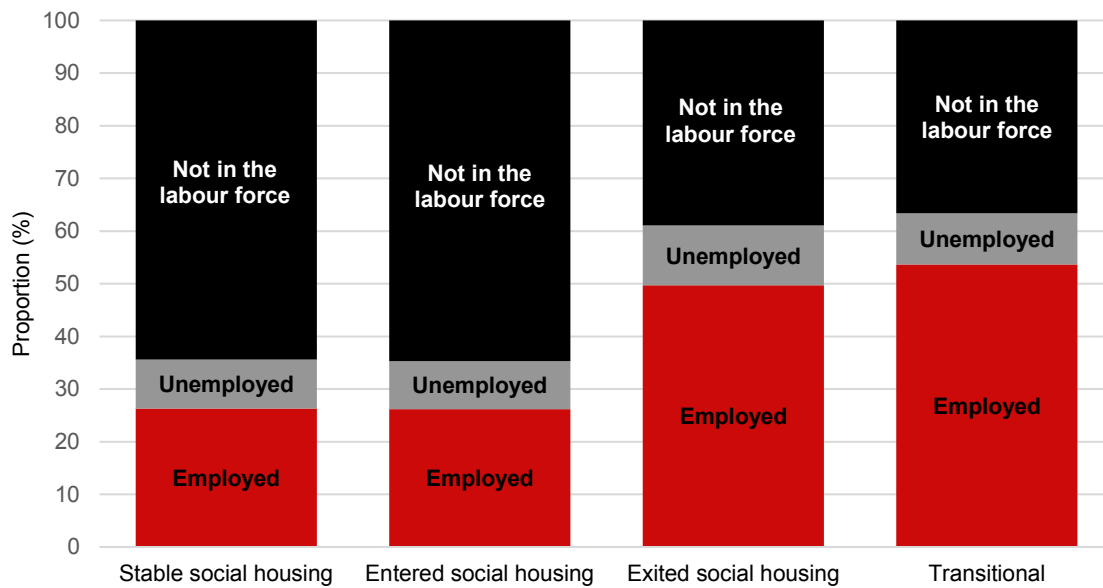
Figure 4: Income distribution (quintile) by entry/exit social housing pattern



Source: HILDA (2000–01 to 20016–17)

Examination of labour force characteristics provides some reinforcement of the results for income distribution. As Figure 5 shows, there is a similar differentiation between people who exited or were transitional, and people were in stable social housing or entered it.

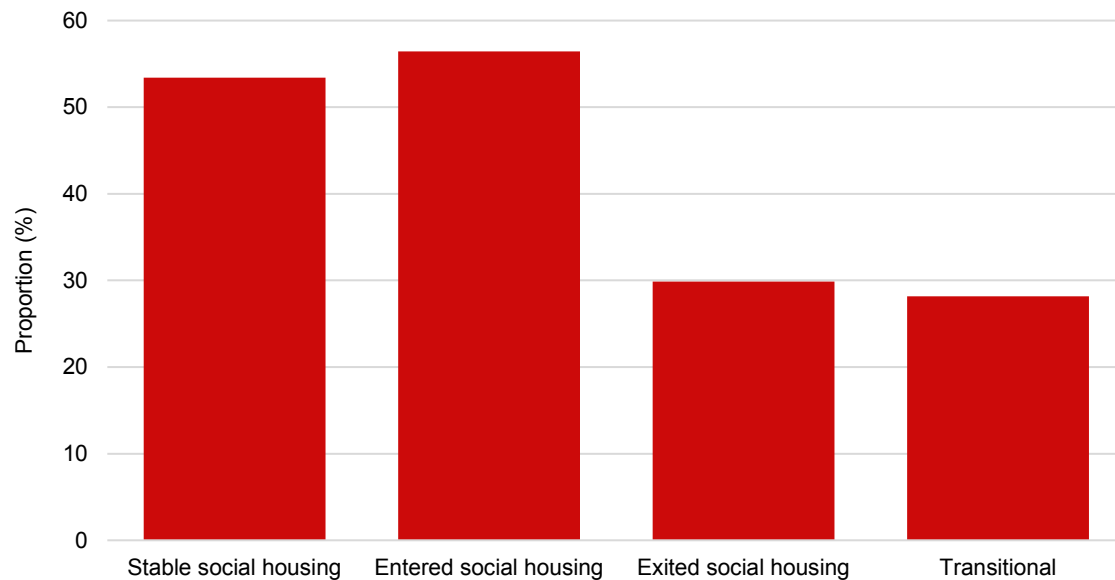
Figure 5: Labour force status by entry/exit social housing pattern



Source: HILDA (2000–01 to 20016–17)

Mirroring these patterns, people with stable social housing trajectories and those who entered social housing were almost twice as likely to have a disability or long-term health condition as people who exited or had a transitional pathway (Figure 6).

Figure 6: Proportion of population with disability or long-term health condition by entry/exit social housing pathway



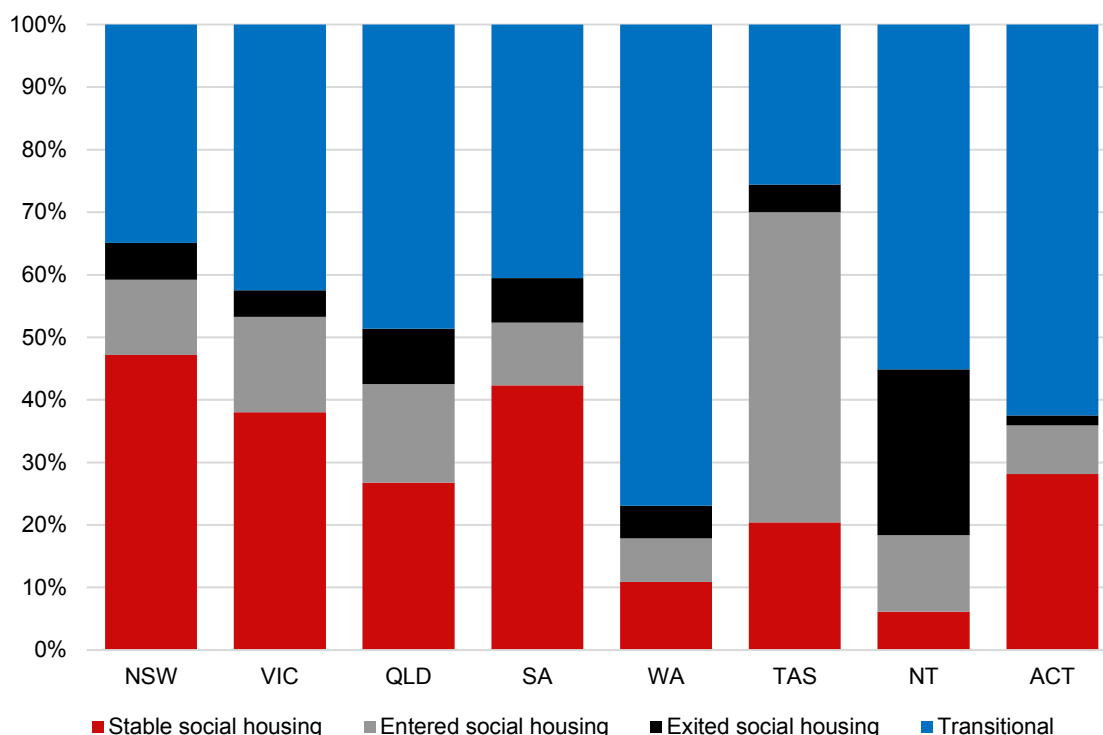
Source: HILDA (2000–01 to 20016–17)

Household structure also appears related to entry and exit patterns. Notable within these results, the group classified as exiting social housing are quite distinct in terms of their household structure profile. More than three quarters lived in couple households (both with and without children), and only a comparatively small percentage lived alone or were lone parents

(5% and 7% respectively). In comparison, people in the stable social housing group were most likely to be lone parents (26%).

Finally, there are substantial differences between Australian states and territories in the relative dominance of each pattern of entry and exit (Figure 7). Western Australia has a dominance of people with transitional pathways, Tasmania has a dominance of people who entered (and remained) in social housing, and New South Wales and South Australia appear to have a dominance of people in stable social housing.

Figure 7: Comparison of entry/exit social housing pathway prevalence by state



Source: HILDA (2000–01 to 20016–17)

2.6 An Australian social housing pathway typology

Analysis of large, linked administrative data allows us to enrich our understanding of the simple social housing pathway typologies described above (which were based on a representative sample of 17,000 Australians). This section analyses social housing typologies in more detail using a large administrative dataset. Over 15 years for an estimated 10 million Australians, the PIA dataset allows us to define seven major entry and exit typologies for people who spent some time in social housing (and a comparison group of people who spent no time in social housing). Following the definition of these pathways, we describe the characteristics of people in each. We then examine relative outcomes, comparing members of each pathway group, with people in the dataset who had no exposure to social housing in the study period.

The great majority (more than 90%) of the almost 10 million person observations in the PIA sample had no exposure to social housing during the 2001–15 study period. Of the 848,036 social housing pathways examined, on average, the majority of people undertaking these pathways were female (59%). Just over 70 per cent were undertaken by people born in Australia and, correspondingly, 29 per cent of pathways were undertaken by people born



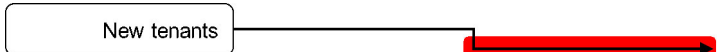




overseas. Just under 15 per cent of all pathways were undertaken by Indigenous² people. A small proportion were identified in the dataset as refugees (3%).

People who spent some time in social housing experienced a diversity of entry and exit pathways. Considering this group as a whole (as detailed in Figure 8), the largest sub-cohort (representing one-third of all pathways) resided in social housing stably throughout the decade. A slightly smaller cohort (26%) entered social housing during the decade and remained in this tenure until at least 2015. Just under 15 per cent of all pathways can be characterised as 'Leavers'—they were initially housed in social housing, but left during the study period. Interestingly, mirroring the 'Leavers', was an identical proportion of pathways that can be described as 'Brief entrants'—people who entered social housing during the study period for at least two annual quarters, but were no longer social housing tenants by the end of the study period. A much smaller (<3%) proportion of the pathways can be described as 'Brief leavers'—people who were housed in social housing initially, left for at least two annual quarters, but returned to social housing before 2015.

The two remaining pathways of interest are similar by their lack of stability. A small proportion (just under 3%) of pathways were initially housed in social housing, but over the 15-year period they exited the tenure at least twice (referred to as 'Transitional leavers'), and another group 'Transitional entrants' (representing 6% of pathways) were housed outside of social housing at the beginning of the period, but entered, exited, and then entered at least one more time during the study period.

² Note: this estimate only includes number where Indigenous status is known.

Figure 8: Summary of pathways and relative prevalence

	Number of individuals within sample population	(%)
 <p>Stable social tenants (In social housing continuously)</p>	287,297	33.9
 <p>Leavers (In social housing initially, then exit)</p>	122,281	14.4
 <p>New tenants (Out of social housing, then enter)</p>	220,503	26.0
 <p>Brief leavers (In social housing initially, then exit, then re-enter)</p>	24,112	2.8
 <p>Brief entrants (Out of social housing, then enter, then exit)</p>	121,963	14.4
 <p>Unstable leavers (In social housing initially, then exit, [...] then enter, then exit)</p>	21,660	2.6
 <p>Unstable entrants (Out of social housing initially, then enter, [...] then exit, then enter)</p>	50,220	5.9

Source: PIA

In seeking to characterise these pathways and understand them, we compared the demographic and descriptive characteristics of each of the seven cohorts. Each of the pathway groups had distinct population profiles:

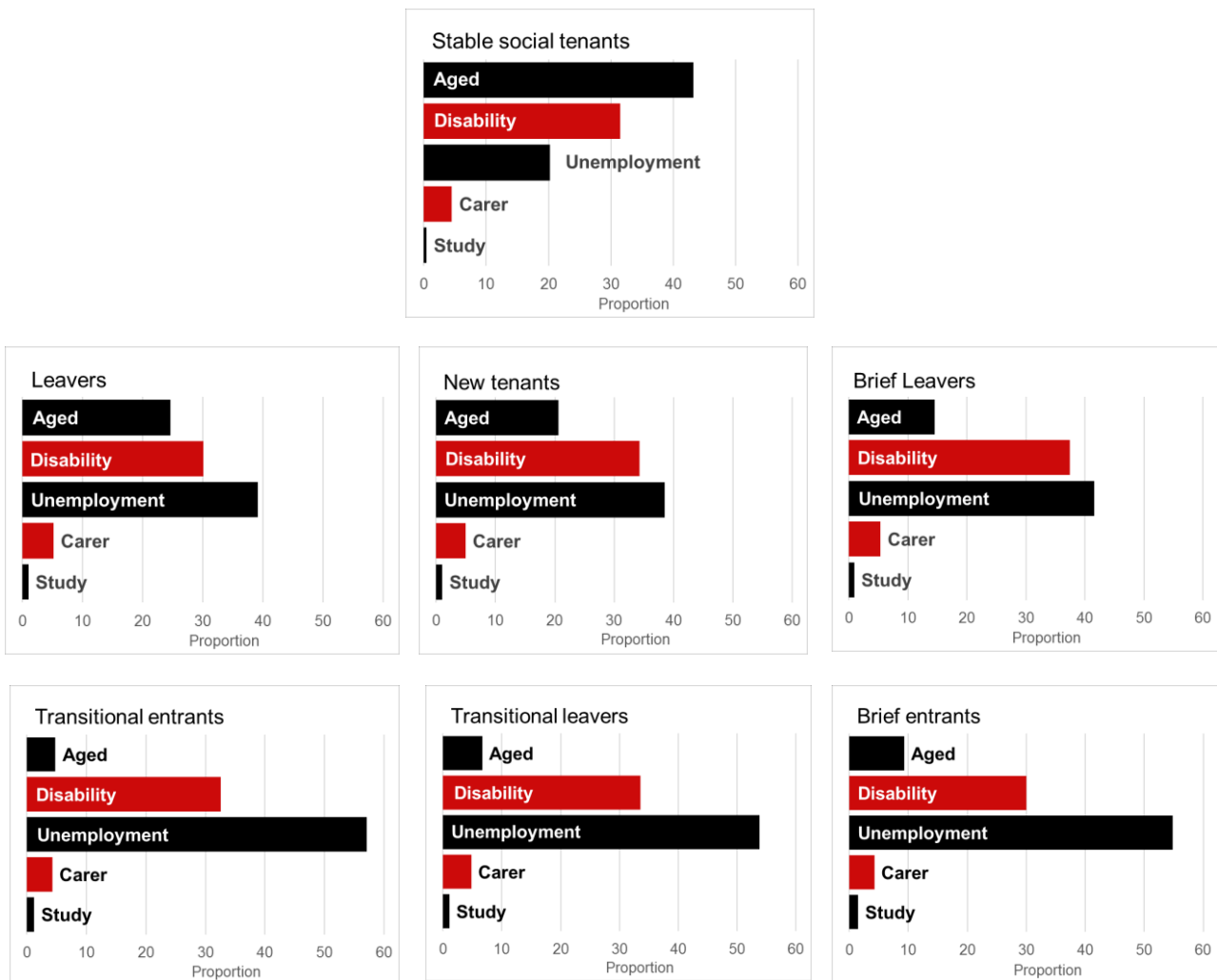
- The *Stable social tenant* cohort represented the most common pathway. This group was notable in having a higher average age than any other pathway cohort (mean age 60 years). More than 60 per cent of people in this pathway were female. A relatively substantial (36%) were born overseas. Compared to the average of all pathways examined, a comparatively small proportion (6%) of the population were Indigenous people, and similarly, refugees were under-represented (less than 2%).
- The *Leavers tenant* cohort was, on average, 10 years younger (mean age 50 years) than the stable social tenant group. Although a similar proportion were female (64%), and refugees (2%), the Indigenous and country of birth profiles of this cohort are distinct from

Stable social tenant cohort. Indigenous people comprised more than 12 per cent of this cohort, double the proportion among *Stable social tenants*, but still less than the average for all pathway types. People born overseas (28%) were correspondingly underrepresented compared to average.

- The *New tenant* cohort was younger, on average, than both *Stable social tenants* and *Leavers* (mean age 48 years). Compared to almost every pathway type, this cohort had the highest proportion of refugees (6%). An above average proportion of this cohort was Indigenous (15%), and almost one-third (32%) was born overseas.
- The *Brief leavers* cohort had a mean age of 47 years, and a slight over representation (compared to average) of females (62%). A majority of this cohort was born in Australia (77%), and a relatively small proportion compared to average were refugees (2%), and Indigenous people were over-represented (almost 24%).
- The cohort of *Brief entrants* was, on average, the youngest, with a mean age of 40 years. It was also the most gender balanced cohort, with 48 per cent being male. More than one in five *Brief entrants* was Indigenous, slightly more than the proportion of people born overseas (19%). The proportion of refugees was slightly higher than average (4%).
- The two cohorts classified as Transitional—*Transitional leavers* and *Transitional entrants*—were noticeably similar. Both shared a much higher than average proportion of Indigenous (36% in both cohorts) people, a dominance of Australian born people (87% per cent in both cohorts), and a relative under-representation of refugees (1% of *Transitional leavers*, and less than 3% of *Transitional entrants*). Mean age was slightly higher within the *Transitional leaver* cohort (41 years compared to 38 years for *Transitional entrants*), and *Transitional leavers* were also more likely to be female (62% compared to 53%).

The pattern of benefit receipt across the seven pathway types is also distinct (as shown in Figure 9 below). *Stable social tenants* are dominantly in receipt of aged pensions, followed by disability benefits. A relatively small proportion (20%) receive unemployment benefits. This pattern is different for *New tenants*, *Leavers*, and *Brief leavers*, who are considerably less likely to receive aged pensions, and more likely to receive unemployment and disability pensions. A third pattern can be seen for *Transitional entrants*, *Transitional leavers*, and *Brief entrants*. This group dominantly receive unemployment benefits. The close alignment in profile of benefit receipt within three groups of pathway types suggests a strong and intertwined relationship between social housing and benefit receipt—both of which likely act together to generate successful or unsuccessful outcomes of social housing exits and pathways. Social housing offers housing affordability and security with less choice about location and housing quality. Receipt of income support offers slightly more flexibility around location (within the parameters of budgeting for a low household income) that may allow people to live closer to families and friends. In defining success, the optimal combination of social housing and benefit receipt is relative to the needs of individuals and families.

Figure 9: Pattern of benefit receipt type by pathway



Source: PIA

2.7 On the pathway to success?

Previous work has considered what successful social housing pathways might be, variously defining success across, for example, stability within social housing, exits without re-entry into social housing, employment outcomes, reduced welfare receipt, or subsequent residential stability following exit from social housing (Seelig et al. 2008; Wiesel et al. 2012). The analyses presented so far in this paper have highlighted substantial socio-demographic patterning of different pathway cohorts, suggesting that success should be conceptualised differently for each of these pathway cohorts. *Stable social tenants*, for example, are very different in their age profile, welfare requirements and engagement with the workforce than *Transitional leavers*. Continued stability within social housing may be considered a successful outcome for *Stable social tenants*, an older (largely beyond working age) cohort. Conversely, *Transitional leavers* may not benefit from stable social housing; a successful outcome for this cohort may, in fact, be stability in another tenure, with the support of employment assistance.

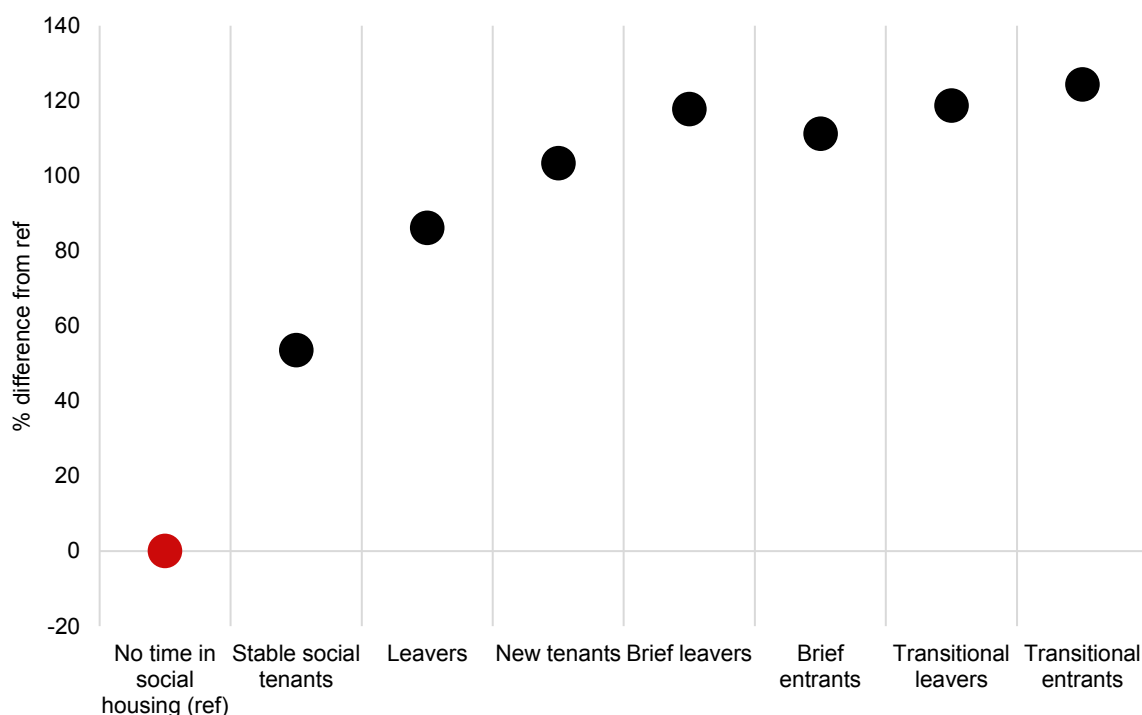
In order to better understand success across the range of trajectories, the following analysis compares outcomes for each of the different pathway cohorts, using two robust measures contained within the PIA dataset. As discussed above, social housing pathways might be

associated with a reduction in welfare receipt and residential stability. Two natural developed outcomes will be a duration of welfare receipt and house moves. Two distinct models are estimated: length of time that respondents were in receipt of income-based welfare benefits (number of quarters); and number of non-local residential moves (across postcodes).

Overall, compared to people in the PIA dataset who spent no time in social housing, people who were in stable social housing over the entire period spent, on average, 53 per cent more time in receipt of welfare benefits. Importantly though, when all social housing pathways are considered, *Stable social tenants* have the lowest average time in receipt of welfare benefits. Figure 10 highlights this gradient between the relative stability of pathways and the amount of time people received welfare benefits. At the most extreme end, and compared to people in the PIA dataset who spent no time in social housing, people classified in the two ‘Transitional’ cohorts (*Transitional leavers* and *Transitional entrants*) spend the longest average time in receipt of welfare benefits (119% and 124% longer than people who spent no time in social housing, respectively).

A range of socio-demographic characteristics correlated with the pathways and our two outcomes were included in the models (as described in Figure 10 and detailed in Appendix 1). Importantly, for each social housing pathway, membership of the pathway cohort explained more of the variation in the outcome (time in receipt of welfare benefits) across the sample than the separate socio-demographic characteristics. There was one unsurprising exception—age—being initially aged over 55 years.

Figure 10: Time in receipt of welfare



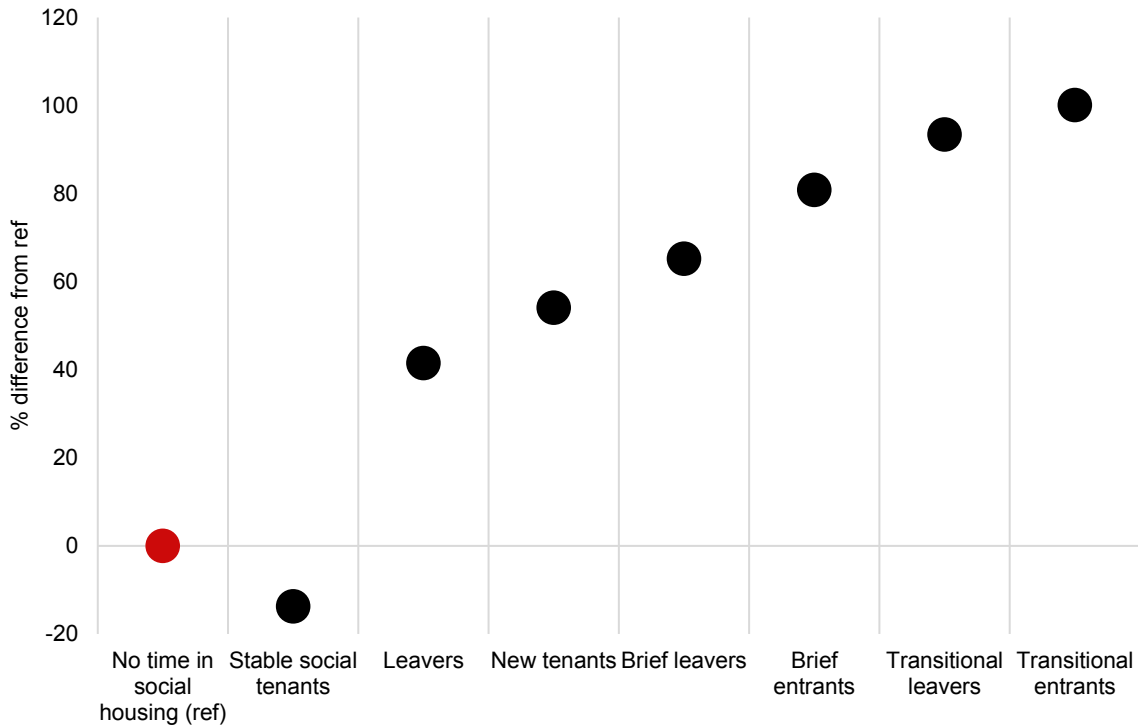
Note: all results are significant at the 1% level. Models control for gender, household Indigenous status, refugee status, country of birth, household structure at baseline, age, and state.

Source: PIA

Our second model explored the relative stability of different housing pathways. In this model, we attempted to capture non-local moves. That is, moves that involved a change of local neighbourhood, and hence the potential breaking of social and support networks. These results (summarised in Figure 11) are interesting and show a gradient roughly aligned with the number

of moves defining each trajectory. Across each of the three pairs of patterns (Leavers and New tenants; Brief leavers and Brief entrants; Transitional leavers and Transitional entrants), people who enter social housing (entrants) are more likely to have moved greater distances on average, than leavers. This is a finding that merits future deeper investigation but suggests that, regardless of the total level of residential instability people have, people who enter social housing are more likely to be pushed from their local area.

Figure 11: Number of non-local moves



Note: all results are significant at the 1% level. Models control for gender, household Indigenous status, refugee status, country of birth, household structure at baseline, age, and state.

Source: PIA

2.8 Some policy considerations

Looking at social housing pathways over time provides much deeper insight into the meaning of successful and unsuccessful outcomes. This provides a challenge to policy development, necessitating a ‘long view’ from people’s past to their future. This long view is important because defining pathways as successful or unsuccessful based on a snapshot of data, or a short series of snapshots, has the potential to be very misleading. What matters to individuals, and ultimately, therefore, to society and the public purse, is not a question of whether individuals enter or leave social housing in a particular year, but more a question of how these events feed into and form longer-term outcomes. Such outcomes include housing circumstances, as well as many other factors, including tenure, financial health, educational outcomes and physical health. Until recently, it has been very difficult to assemble credible evidence on these outcomes, but the research detailed in this paper has occurred at a time of (and partially as a consequence of) enhanced data access and methodological advance. Together, these factors enable the first strands of evidence to be captured in a way that gives insights to this ‘long view’. Of course, this study is one of the first of its kind in Australia, and so continued improvements to data access—particularly large, linked administrative data—are to be expected, and will begin to drive different policy options based on such ‘long view’ analyses.

The results discussed in this chapter reinforce (following Robinson 2012; and Fitzpatrick and Pawson 2014) that it is overly simplistic to define social housing pathways as either 'successful' or 'unsuccessful'. Success is highly context dependent. For example, an exit from social housing may be regarded as successful for someone who is active in the labour market and likely to sustain a private tenancy. An exit to private rental for an older person who requires more support may be regarded as an unsuccessful pathway. On the other hand, stability within the social rented sector may be a successful pathway outcome, but in some cases, it may reflect people's inability to move within a tight social housing sector.

Finally, this study has focussed on social housing pathways. From a policy perspective, it is important to consider these findings in the light of the recent, and substantial changes within the social housing sector. While the number of social housing dwellings in Australia has remained roughly the same, the public housing stock represented within it has decreased and been replaced by a community housing stock (largely through the process of stock transfer). With this ongoing and large-scale shift from public to community managed dwellings within the social rented sector in mind, there is a need to fully understand the impact this may have on people's pathway outcomes.

3 What does this imply for policy?

The policy impetus to understand social housing pathways in greater depth reflects escalating pressures on the sector. Given that very few social rented dwelling completions occur each year in Australia, turnover of the existing stock represents the only realistic mechanism for ensuring that this scarce resource is appropriately and efficiently allocated to individuals, and their households, with greatest need.

The gradual move towards fixed-term tenancies, and stricter and more frequent checks on income eligibility, can be seen as preliminary policy steps in a new direction in which social tenancies increasingly become a stricter safety net for shorter periods of eligibility sufficient for tenants to springboard into alternative housing arrangements. Such policy options are likely to involve greater scrutiny on engagement in training, education and labour market programs. Indeed, there is already policy interest in this related area (see, for example, Cebulla et al. 2018).

Thus, from a policy perspective we might pose an alternative set of inter-linked questions to the four research questions pursued in this study:

- Under what circumstances can early exits from social renting be safely encouraged, and for which individuals and their households?
- What is the potential for freeing up scarce social rented housing opportunities by taking this approach?
- Do the economic costs and benefits from such a policy justify it, and for which groups of individuals is this true?
- For which groups of individuals is it more cost effective (in the sense of 'economic' rather than 'financial' cost) to avoid early exits from social rented housing?

This set of policy research questions reflects the reality that not all exits (let alone early exits) from social rented housing end in positive outcomes for individuals, their households, or the public purse. The research presented in this report allows us to draw some cautious conclusions about some of these questions.

3.1 Reflecting on the research questions

In this study we posed four research questions:

- 1 What is the nature of the principal social housing pathways (into, within, and out of social housing) and what are the experiences of tenants on these pathways?
- 2 Are some groups within the tenant population more (or less) likely to establish successful social housing pathways?
- 3 Under what circumstances are pathways out of social housing considered unlikely to succeed?
- 4 What happens once tenants exit social housing? What is known about those who subsequently re-enter, those who move to private rental housing, and those who enter home ownership?

In terms of the **principal social housing pathways**, the findings of this analysis were consistent with previous research. For example, the socio-demographic profiles of stable social housing tenants were different from tenants in other sectors and those with multiple transitions between sectors. Social renting reflects a higher proportion of Indigenous Australians, lower levels of educational attainment, higher proportions of individuals not participating in the labour

force, higher levels of single parenthood, more single person households, and a higher proportion of households with an individual having a disability or long-term illness.

Social housing tenants mainly move to, or from, the private rental sector, and their main cited reasons for moving tend to relate to household or neighbourhood factors and demographic change (household formation). In fact, a potentially more surprising finding is that, although social housing tenants are a population defined (through allocation policy) as having high and often complex needs, their reasons for moving are not discernibly different to the reasons stated by individuals living in other tenures.

Our second question asked about the **characteristics of successful social housing pathways**. We found considerable state and territory variation, which probably reflects a rapidly changing policy environment. However, in general, most social housing tenants are stable or new tenants (more than 50%) and fewer than 10 per cent have pathways that might be characterised as transitory, involving multiple moves into and out of the sector. People with long-term illness or disability are more generally associated with longer-term or stable social housing pathways, while employment assistance is more strongly associated with temporary exposure to social housing (i.e. transitory pathways). This suggests that social housing continues to operate both as a safety net and as a springboard to employment and higher income opportunities for individuals. However, an interesting finding here is that transitory pathways through social housing are associated with longer periods of exposure to benefits, in addition to great levels of geographic mobility. These might suggest, respectively, higher economic costs and greater disruption (for example, to the education of children of such individuals).

In relation to our third question—in **what circumstances are social housing exits unlikely to succeed**—it is worth noting that the HILDA analysis revealed a number of largely unsurprising findings, including the fact that stable social renters have a higher likelihood of being older, not in the labour force, with a disability or long-term health condition, to be single and/or a single parent. A group of individuals with similar characteristics was found to have some experience of social rented housing but was not stable or entrenched in the sector. Individuals in this group were less likely to have failed to complete high school, and less likely to have a disability or long-term health condition. They were less likely to be childless, lone person households than settled social renters, but were as likely to be lone parents than settled social renters. This combination of circumstances probably suggests that while social renting is effective at targeting those in greatest need, it is also playing a role in supporting individuals who temporarily withdraw from the labour market (because they are having children, for example) but facilitating later re-entry to the labour force. This analysis also reveals one of the more promising groups of individuals temporarily housed in the social rented sector who might successfully transition out at the appropriate time, and given appropriate alternatives.

Finally, what happens to people who exit, and those who re-enter, social rented housing?

The analysis of HILDA data shows that, of the approximate 1,100 social renters in the dataset, around 200 transition out of the tenure, and another 200 transition in, each year. People leaving the sector predominantly enter the private rental sector, closely followed by 'other tenures'. The numbers entering home ownership are small (around 20 each year). Other tenures represent around 60. Given that 'other tenures' includes people renting informally, or renting from another individual, it is almost certainly the case that approximately one-third of people exiting social rented housing are doing so by moving into housing circumstances that are inherently more precarious than either social or formal private renting through a real estate agent. This is an interesting finding, and an important one from a policy perspective: given that only around 5–10 per cent of social tenants exit the system each year, the outflows are currently modest. Thus, to find that approximately one-third of this flow is potentially unable to find more secure housing options is worrying. We also know from past AHURI research that many individuals in

the social rented sector who have thought about leaving choose to remain in the sector if they can, as a result of current or feared future employment insecurities.

HILDA data also show a distinct difference in terms of income profile when comparing individuals on the four simple typological pathways. The most even income distribution was among those in the 'transitional' group, characterised by instability in terms of multiple exit and re-entry to social renting. Although individuals with very low incomes (lowest quintile) were over-represented within this pathway type, there was a roughly even spread of across the remaining income quintiles. Those in social housing throughout the HILDA survey (stable), and those entering social housing and remaining in the tenure, had similar income distribution profiles, with roughly 70 per cent falling into the lowest 40 per cent of the income distribution. Individuals who exited social renting were more uniformly distributed across the second, third and fourth quintiles. These income patterns suggests that income (and by extension employment) is playing an important role in facilitating exit from social housing.

We acknowledge both the strengths and weaknesses of the two datasets used in this study. Although HILDA data is a large, nationally representative longitudinal dataset, it contains a small number of social housing tenants. The HILDA dataset is also limited by non-response and attrition, which impact statistical inference. These weaknesses of the HILDA dataset could be overcome by using an administration dataset like PIA that contains Australian population information. However, PIA excludes people who never claim benefits. By focussing on social housing pathways within the PIA dataset, low-income individuals would be over-represented in our sample, impacting the generalisation of our findings.

3.2 Conclusion and future directions

The study of housing pathways is a perennial topic in housing studies literature, having captured the imagination of policymakers and researchers alike. The concept of 'pathways' has received various definitions, but the most compelling one links together the notion of housing careers (succession of tenure and housing consumption outcomes) with life course factors, capturing major life events and labour market outcomes. In this study, we have not sought to replicate the rapidly expanding literature on housing pathways, but to consider their meaning in the context of evolving Australian housing policy. We have focussed on the social rented sector, primarily because this sector has been subject to restructuring and significant change in the form of stock transfers, and to long-term decline in relative terms given Australia's rapid (by Global North standards) population growth.

In writing this report, the research team is conscious that this is one of the first studies of its type in its pursuit of linked administrative data capable of revealing linkages between housing and non-housing outcomes. The quality and availability of linked data will improve over time, and many more studies will follow. For this reason, our conclusions are necessarily indicative, rather than firm. Yet, overall the evidence in this report is at least suggestive that there is a gap in policy, and that this gap concerns the very group of individuals, and their households, who have the potential to exit the social rented sector on a positive (successful) pathway. These are the 5–10 per cent of households who appear to improve their employment prospects and incomes during their tenure in the social rented sector. Yet, if there are no viable or secure follow-on tenure options for them, many in this group are destined to fail and return to the social rented sector as applicants and/or tenants. Such outcomes may reflect labour market insecurity (noting that many low-income workers have variable or fluctuating hours of employment), or the substantial gap between housing costs for those in social and those in private rental sectors.

To what extent should it be a policy problem if successful social rented pathway exiters subsequently fail and re-enter the social rented sector? Unfortunately, on the basis of the available evidence, we cannot say whether or not the economic (as well as financial) costs

imposed on the public purse are higher than the financial costs of providing either continued social housing tenancy, or the supply of some alternative follow-on housing option. This is clearly a significant gap in the evidence-base that should be addressed as a priority if we are to take seriously any policy option to actively promote targeted early exits from social rented housing.

We end this report with a challenge for future work to broaden our understanding of the social housing pathways. Though the typologies developed in this study are reasonably comprehensible and enable some important conclusions to be derived, a natural extension of this work is to use qualitative analysis to further understanding of these typologies. Our study reveals considerable differences in the social housing profiles between Australian states and territories, which doubtless reflect different histories and heritages of housing stock, different contemporary market pressures, and different policy and economic environment. A replication by states and territories will offer empirical evidence that greatly improves policy implications.

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Appendix 1: Detailed output tables

Table A1: Time in receipt of welfare

	log of Time in receipt of welfare				
	Coef.	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	P> z	Sign.
Social housing pathways					
No time in social housing	REF				
Stable social tenants	0.54	0.53	0.54	0.00	***
Leavers	0.86	0.86	0.87	0.00	***
New tenants	1.03	1.03	1.04	0.00	***
Brief leavers	1.18	1.17	1.19	0.00	***
Brief entrants	1.11	1.11	1.12	0.00	***
Unstable leavers	1.19	1.18	1.20	0.00	***
Unstable entrants	1.24	1.24	1.25	0.00	***
Sex					
Male	REF				
Female	0.24	0.23	0.24	0.00	***
Indigenous status					
Non-Indigenous	REF				
Indigenous	0.29	0.29	0.29	0.00	***
Refugee status					
Non-refugee					
Refugee	0.12	0.12	0.13	0.00	***
Country of birth					
Overseas	REF				
Australia	-0.02	-0.03	-0.02	0.00	***
Baseline marital status					
Married	REF				
Single	-0.08	-0.08	-0.07	0.00	***
Baseline age					
20–30	REF				
30–55	0.39	0.38	0.39	0.00	***
55+	1.10	1.10	1.10	0.00	***

	log of Time in receipt of welfare				
	Coef.	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	P> z	Sign.
Baseline state					
Australian Capital Territory	REF				
New South Wales	0.04	0.03	0.04	0.00	***
Victoria	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.00	***
Queensland	-0.04	-0.04	-0.03	0.00	***
South Australia	0.07	0.06	0.07	0.00	***
Western Australia	-0.08	-0.09	-0.08	0.00	***
Tasmania	0.11	0.10	0.11	0.00	***
Northern Territory	-0.18	-0.18	-0.17	0.00	***
Moving interstate					
Stay in the same state	REF				
Time in moving interstate	0.22	0.22	0.22	0.00	***

Note: *** denotes significant at 1%; ** significant at 5%; * significant at 10%. Robust standard errors are used for statistical inference.

Source: Authors.

Table A2: Number of non-local moves

	log of Number of non-local Moves				
	Coef.	Lower 95% CI	Upper 95% CI	P> z	Sign.
Social housing pathways					
No time in social housing	REF				
Stable social tenants	-0.14	-0.14	-0.14	0.00	***
Leavers	0.42	0.41	0.42	0.00	***
New tenants	0.54	0.54	0.54	0.00	***
Brief leavers	0.65	0.64	0.66	0.00	***
Brief entrants	0.81	0.80	0.81	0.00	***
Unstable leavers	0.93	0.92	0.95	0.00	***
Unstable entrants	1.00	0.99	1.01	0.00	***
Sex					
Male	REF				
Female	0.04	0.04	0.04	0.00	***

Indigenous status					
Non-Indigenous	REF				
Indigenous	0.13	0.13	0.13	0.00	***
Refugee status					
Non-refugee	REF				
Refugee	0.08	0.08	0.08	0.00	***
Country of birth					
Overseas	REF				
Australia	-0.11	-0.11	-0.11	0.00	***
Baseline marital status					
Married	REF				
Single	-0.01	-0.01	-0.01	0.00	***
Baseline age					
20–30	REF				
30–55	-0.12	-0.12	-0.12	0.00	***
55+	-0.24	-0.24	-0.24	0.00	***
Baseline state					
Australian Capital Territory	REF				
New South Wales	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	0.00	***
Victoria	-0.02	-0.02	-0.02	0.00	***
Queensland	0.05	0.05	0.05	0.00	***
South Australia	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	***
Western Australia	0.02	0.02	0.02	0.00	***
Tasmania	-0.04	-0.04	-0.04	0.00	***
Northern Territory	-0.12	-0.13	-0.12	0.00	***
Moving interstate					
Stay in the same state	REF				
Time in moving interstate	0.37	0.36	0.37	0.00	***

Note: *** denotes significant at 1%; ** significant at 5%; * significant at 10%. Robust standard errors are used for statistical inference.

Source: Authors.

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