Final Report

Understanding and addressing community opposition to affordable housing development

authored by

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ACRONYMS

ABS	Australian Bureau of Statistics
AHURI	Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Ltd.
BANANA	Build Absolutely Nothing Anywhere Near Anyone/Anything
BCC	Brisbane City Council
BHC	Brisbane Housing Company
CCforB	Concerned Citizens for Bluewater
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPP	City of Port Phillip
LGA	Local Government Area
LULU	Locally Unwanted Land Use
MAG	Mitchelton Action Group
MP	Member of Parliament
NBESP	Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan
NFP	Not-for-profit
NIMBY	Not in my back-yard
NRAS	National Rental Affordability Scheme (see Ch. 1)
NSW	New South Wales
PPHA	Port Phillip Housing Association
SHA	State Housing Authority
SHI	Social Housing Initiative (see Ch. 1)
VCAT	Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Research aims

The development of affordable housing in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods is frequently frustrated by opposition from local residents, planners, politicians and the media. This opposition can lead to costly construction delays and amendments for affordable housing developers and in some cases may even force the abandonment of projects. In the most high-profile cases, the opposition threatens to undermine political and public support for affordable housing provision. There has been much research on the phenomenon of community opposition to affordable housing development in the USA, but there is almost no equivalent research in Australia. This is a concern because current policy directions suggest that new affordable housing development in the coming years will increasingly be located in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, most often on small sites bounded by multiple properties.

The central aims of this study were to improve understanding of community opposition to affordable housing in Australian cities and to consider how that opposition can be mitigated or addressed. The study addressed the following research questions:

1. What is the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing?

2. What are the stated and unstated factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects?

3. How and why does community opposition to affordable housing development escalate?

4. What are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?

5. How can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated or addressed through policy measures and practical steps?

Methods

Mixed-methods case studies were undertaken in four council areas exhibiting varying levels of opposition to affordable housing development between 2007 and 2011. The case studies were Parramatta (New South Wales), Port Phillip (Victoria), Brisbane (Queensland) and Cairns (Queensland). Several research methods were used:

Interviews: semi-structured interviews were undertaken with 50 people. Interviewees included representatives from local and state government (officers and politicians), affordable housing developers, housing advocacy groups and objectors to affordable housing proposals. The interviews helped address all five research questions.

Submissions data: 727 written submissions made by members of the public in opposition to affordable housing proposals were analysed. This provided information on the factors that underlay community opposition to affordable housing development.

Interview-surveys: post-occupancy interview-surveys were undertaken with 134 residents living in areas of Parramatta where affordable housing projects had been opposed by local community members between 2009 and 2011, but had since been completed and occupied. The aim with the interview-surveys was to assess the *experienced* effects of affordable housing development on residents in these areas.

Hedonic modelling: a common concern raised by objectors to affordable housing proposals is that local property values will be diminished as a result. Hedonic

modelling was used to measure the influence that affordable housing development in Brisbane since 2002 had on property sales values in surrounding areas.

Focus group: a focus group was run with affordable housing residents and representatives from affordable housing developers. The focus group was primarily used to test and discuss the study's preliminary findings and recommendations.

Key findings (Chapter 8)

The policy and housing market context for affordable housing

Most affordable housing proposals are not controversial but a small number of high-profile cases undermine political and public support for affordable housing provision.

Levels of opposition to affordable housing tend to be greater in relatively wealthy areas, especially where there is no precedent for multi-unit development or affordable housing.

Opposition to affordable housing is highly localised, with most submissions made against affordable housing proposals coming from people living close to the site.

For affordable housing policies to work effectively, state and local governments need to co-operate.

Planning assessment processes can generate or exacerbate community opposition to affordable housing, especially where community involvement is limited.

Factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing development

The most common concerns raised by objectors in formal submissions made against affordable housing proposals were planning issues (parking, density, amenity etc.). The imagined characteristics of future residents was raised in almost 20 per cent of submissions, but some interviewees felt this was an under-representation, with many objectors not wishing to highlight concerns about future residents in their formal submissions.

In the case study areas, negative perceptions of affordable housing residents were widespread, mirroring findings from comparable studies in the USA.

There was also widespread confusion about what affordable housing was, who owned and managed it and who lived in it. This was the case for many council officers and politicians, as well as for residents.

In Port Phillip, where there has been long-standing support from the local council for affordable housing provision, proposals for affordable housing often encountered both opposition and support from community members.

The escalation of opposition to affordable housing

Opposition to affordable housing is generally short-lived and tends to be most fierce and widespread early on. Mirroring the findings of other studies internationally, in the case studies it appeared that once projects had been completed, the opposition faded away. This may be because the experienced impacts were not as bad as feared (Chapter 7) or because objectors simply saw no point proceeding with the opposition.

Local politicians and the media often play a key role in the escalation of a campaign of opposition to affordable housing development.

A perception among objectors that governments or development proponents are dismissive of community concerns can intensify the opposition to a proposal.

The experienced effects of affordable housing on host areas (see Chapter 7)

Post-occupancy interview-surveys indicated that 78 per cent of residents living in areas where controversial affordable housing proposals had been built since 2009 had noticed little or no effect from that development. However, there were a small number of projects where many local residents had experienced negative effects, especially to do with parking, noise and a few 'problem tenants'.

The impact of affordable housing development on property sales values can be positive or negative, but it is usually minimal either way and far outweighed by other factors. The study found no evidence to suggest that affordable housing development has a universally damaging impact on property sales values.

Strategies for mitigating and addressing community opposition to affordable housing (Chapter 9)

What can developers do?

1. Pre-application stage

→ Get positive messages about affordable housing out through tours of projects, meet and greets, the media, promotional material and by recruiting advocates.

→ Seek in-principle support from decision-makers.

→ Include likely community response as part of your locational strategy.

→ Recruit supporters from local councils and/or the community.

→ Identify people or groups who may potentially become opposition ringleaders and attempt to bring them onside.

2. Development application stage

→ Make sure the first conversation is with local politicians.

→ Build within planning controls.

→ Engage community members, listen to them and be forthcoming with information.

→ Be willing to negotiate with community members, but establish parameters for that negotiation (e.g. will negotiate on design but not on residents).

→ Face-to-face contact between developers and objectors can defuse opposition.

What can governments do?

→ Ensure compatibility between local and state policies.

→ Promote community and local government engagement in the development of new policies.

→ Develop parking standards for affordable housing.

→ Recognise that community opposition can improve development outcomes and involve residents in development assessment.

→ Consider whether it makes sense for affordable housing and market housing to have separate planning assessment tracks.

→ Provide education on affordable housing for community leaders and local council officers and politicians.

→ Develop a strategic approach to improving the image of affordable housing.

→ Provide support for affordable housing developers where projects encounter opposition.

→ Establish strong support for affordable housing provision in strategic policy documents, making affordable housing part of the political mandate.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the study

Across Australia, recent government initiatives aimed at supporting an increase in affordable housing supply have been frustrated by opposition from community members who wish to keep such housing out of their neighbourhoods. Between 2009 and 2011, community opposition to affordable housing development was particularly fierce as a major financial investment by the Australian Government brought a significant increase in levels of new dwelling construction. At this time, there were reports of objectors staging protest marches, heckling politicians, vandalising construction sites, pursuing legal action against development proponents and even one local council erecting three metre steel signs outside the sites of unwanted development proposals. Often these actions were reported in local and regional newspapers, sometimes they even attracted the attention of national newspapers and primetime television shows. Not only did the opposition in certain cases result in costly delays and amendments for affordable housing developers, it also forced the abandonment of projects and had political, public relations and policy ramifications in some places. Far from being confined to issues of amenity for householders in properties adjoining development sites, the actions of objectors were often driven and co-ordinated as much by local politicians and businesspeople as by residents.

The opposition to affordable housing between 2009 and 2011 was by no means an isolated phenomenon and must be positioned within a much broader trend in recent years towards the increased involvement of community activists in opposition to all sorts of unwanted development in Australian cities; proposals for higher-density residential buildings, shopping centres, telephone masts, electrical substations and wind farms have all been the subject of recent challenge by activist groups. Nor is community opposition to affordable housing in any way unique to Australia; there already exists a vast and multi-disciplinary literature on the topic overseas. Currently, however, we have little idea of the extent to which this overseas literature can usefully be applied to Australian cities because there is almost no local research to complement it. Coupled with the more general rise of community activism in Australian cities, this gap in knowledge is potentially a major cause for concern, not least because current policy directions point to the likelihood that new affordable housing development in the coming years will increasingly be focussed in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, most often on smaller sites bounded by multiple properties. Local opposition must therefore be seen as a factor impacting on efforts to de-concentrate social housing and to attract private investment into affordable housing development.

With this as its backdrop, the central aim of this study was to improve understanding of community opposition to affordable housing in Australian cities, and to consider how that opposition might best be mitigated or addressed. Using a mixed-methods research approach applied to four of the most 'extreme' (Flyvbjerg 2006) cases of community opposition to affordable housing in recent years, the study addressed the following five research questions:

1. What is the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing?

2. What are the stated and unstated factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects?

3. How and why does community opposition to affordable housing development escalate?

4. What are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?

5. How can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated or addressed through policy measures and practical steps?

The findings of the study shed light on the phenomenon of community opposition to affordable housing in Australian cities and generate a series of recommendations for mitigating or addressing that opposition, both for policy-makers and developers of affordable housing. In addition, a robust evidence base is produced that documents the experienced impact of affordable housing development on host areas in Australian cities—the first of its kind.

1.2   Defining affordable housing

This study is concerned with community opposition to affordable housing. Definitions of 'affordable housing' vary across the Australian states and internationally, but we use the term, following Gurran et al. (2007), to refer to housing which is affordable (in that it accounts for no more than 30% of gross household income) for low and moderate income groups across home ownership, private rental and government rental tenures. This broad definition of affordable housing then includes traditional social housing (owned by governments or not-for-profit housing providers), as well as other forms of sub-market and market housing for rent and purchase. We chose to use this broad definition because the instances of community opposition that we examine in the study are by no means confined to social housing, but span a much broader range of housing developments initiated by governments, not-for-profit housing organisations and private developers. At times, it is necessary to use more specific terms such as 'social housing' and 'public housing', particularly where we are referring to government initiatives or policies, or to historical periods of housing development. These, however, remain sub-categories within the broader concept of affordable housing. In Chapter 9, we discuss the issue of terminology in the context of the study's findings, considering whether this broad concept of 'affordable housing' is in fact a useful one.

Throughout the report, we refer to the state government agencies responsible for social housing development and management as 'State Housing Authorities' (SHAs). This is because the names of the relevant agencies vary between states and in some cases also changed in the period covered by the case studies. SHA is used in order to avoid confusion.

1.3   Policy context

The fierce opposition to affordable housing development witnessed in Australian cities between 2009 and 2011, outlined above, coincided with a significant increase in the level of affordable housing construction activity in this period, which itself was prompted by several funding and policy initiatives introduced from 2007 onwards. Following sustained reductions in the real value of capital investment in new affordable housing over the thirty years up to 2007 (Jacobs et al. 2010) and the consequent decline in the availability and physical condition of social housing in Australian cities and towns, a series of direct and indirect measures by governments in 2007, 2008 and 2009 explicitly sought to boost new affordable housing supply. Below, we briefly discuss those initiatives that were most relevant to the present study and provide links to sources of further information.

1.3.1   Social Housing Initiative

Following the collapse of global financial markets in 2008, the Australian Government established the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan (NBESP). Through the

NBESP, the Commonwealth Government enacted various policies to stimulate economic growth. As part of this, $5.25 billion was committed to the construction of new social housing over three years to June 2012 under the Social Housing Initiative (SHI), with this new housing to be developed by not-for-profit (NFP) housing providers or state and territory governments (Victorian Government 2009; KPMG 2012). It was projected that the SHI would deliver 19 200 homes nationally, representing the largest investment in social housing growth in decades in Australia (Milligan et al. 2010, p.334). Because of the Australian Government's tight timelines for the delivery of new dwellings under the SHI, planning assessment processes were in many cases streamlined as a way of reducing timeframes for making planning decisions. Across the country, planning regulations were amended under the SHI in order to give state governments responsibility for approving social housing projects, in many cases removing any formal requirement for public notification.

1.3.2 National Rental Affordability Scheme

Introduced in 2008, the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) offered financial incentives to people, businesses and NFP organisations to build and rent dwellings for eligible low and moderate income households at a rate that was at least 20 per cent below market rent, for a minimum of 10 years (Australian Government no date). The incentives available through NRAS can be tax offsets, direct payments or in-kind financial support provided by the Australian and state or territory governments.

1.3.3 Using the planning system to secure affordable housing

Since 2007, state and territory governments in Australia have increasingly sought to use the planning system to deliver increases in affordable housing supply. Especially in New South Wales, Queensland and South Australia, the planning system has been used to secure affordable housing through a range of both voluntary incentives and mandatory schemes. This has included strategies for land release, the reduction of barriers to affordable housing development, incentives to encourage new privately-built affordable housing and mechanisms for securing affordable housing in major new developments (Davison et al. 2012). Sometimes these planning measures have been targeted towards specific geographic locations or specific types of sites, but in many cases they have been more widely applicable.

1.3.4 Increased role for not-for-profit and private developers in delivering affordable housing

While the initiatives identified above were conceived and implemented by the Australian Government or by state and territory governments, they usually sought to support an increased role for non-government agencies in the provision of affordable housing. Specifically, they provided incentives or requirements for private developers to engage in affordable housing development and created new opportunities for NFP housing developers to expand their housing stock and asset base. This is significant in the context of this study because it has meant that many of the recent decisions about the type, scale and location of new affordable housing development in Australian cities have not been centralised in government bureaucracies, but have instead been made by a diverse range of smaller non-government organisations, each with their own priorities, approach, areas of operation and expertise.

1.4   Structure of the report

This introductory chapter has briefly discussed the background to the opposition to affordable housing development witnessed in Australian cities between 2009 and 2011, as well as the aims of the present study and the questions that it addressed. In the next chapter, we review the existing literature on community opposition to

affordable housing, much of which originates in the United States. This is a vast literature and we intentionally summarise it in some detail, allowing us to later reflect on its main messages in light of our own findings. In Chapter 3, the study's mixed-methods research approach is described and justified, with the links between the research design and research questions made explicit. Chapters 4, 5 and 6 then discuss four 'extreme' cases of community opposition to affordable housing development in the states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland respectively. Each of these case study chapters provides a comprehensive account of the opposition based on a cross-section of viewpoints and opinions. The case studies are necessarily detailed and are treated in the report as standalone chapters because of the contextual differences between them, particularly in relation to policy frameworks and demographics. Following the three case study chapters, Chapter 7 directly addresses research question 4 by examining the impact that affordable housing development has (or has not) had on host areas in a range of Sydney and Brisbane neighbourhoods.

Chapter 8 and Chapter 9 summarise and discuss the study's findings in relation to the five research questions outlined above, and make practical recommendations for policy-makers and developers of affordable housing. In Chapter 8, we pull together the findings from all four case studies to look at why people object to affordable housing development, how that opposition escalates and whether people's fears about affordable housing development do actually eventuate. In the final chapter, Chapter 9, we then directly address our fifth research question by considering the ways in which community opposition to affordable housing might be mitigated or addressed through policy measures and practical steps.

2   LITERATURE REVIEW

The structure of this literature review broadly reflects the study's five main research questions, as outlined in the introduction. The first section provides a brief contextual basis for the study, specifically outlining the environment for affordable housing development in Australia. The remainder of the chapter then turns to the existing literature on community opposition to locally unwanted development, especially affordable housing development. The second section of the review discusses the nature of community opposition to unwanted development; the people involved, the tactics used and the rationale of the opposition. The third then considers the factors that underlie the opposition to affordable housing specifically. The fourth section is aimed at helping address the fourth research question and outlines the literature on the *experienced* impacts of affordable housing development (and how these relate to the *feared* impacts). The fifth and final section responds to the fifth research question by looking at what the literature says can be done to avoid, mitigate or address community opposition to affordable housing development.

2.1   The context for affordable housing development in Australia

Community opposition to affordable housing development cannot be understood in isolation from the history of public and social housing in Australia over the last half century and more. While it is not our intention to provide a detailed account of the history of public housing and social housing in Australia (see Troy 2012 for a comprehensive account), it is important to note a few points, particularly for the benefit of the international reader. Firstly, there were sustained reductions in the real value of capital investment in new social housing in Australia over the 30 years to 2007, with a consequent decline in the proportion of housing stock that the sector represented. The most recent census of population indicates that fewer than 5 per cent of occupied dwellings were rented from a state or territory housing authority or a NFP housing organisation in 2011 (ABS 2011). This shrinking of the sector, in turn, has been associated with the stricter targeting of allocations and the increased concentration of the least well-off and highest-needs households in social housing (Jacobs et al. 2010).

Portrayals of social housing in Australia's media are overwhelmingly negative, with social housing estates frequently being positioned as sites of crime, delinquency and disorder through unsympathetic or sensational reporting (Jacobs et al. 2011). This is accompanied by a political discourse that consistently frames social housing as an inferior form of tenure, not in a legal sense but in a social one where 'the private home rather than public housing was seen as … the font of civic virtues' (Murphy 1995). As summarised by Ruming et al. (2004, p.235):

> Housing policy over the last 50 years has been structured around a politically initiated ideology of home ownership as normal and beneficial, and public housing as an inferior form of tenure.

Over the past decade, public housing authorities in Australia have made a concerted effort to tackle the place-based stigma associated with large concentrations of social housing by means of redevelopment and partial sale to owner occupiers, and through favouring smaller scale and dispersed new developments such as those that will be the subject of this study. However, in making the case for breaking up large social housing estates, researchers, policy-makers and housing managers have focussed attention on the perceived deficiencies of social housing communities and the malign effects of disadvantaged households residing in proximity to each other. Policy and consultation documents produced to justify specific redevelopment projects have

typically referred to selected indicators to present a narrative of community life in need of urgent intervention (Darcy 2010).

As Luxford (2006, p.3) points out, 'it is not necessarily the concentration of public housing per se that creates stigma. Rather, it is the allocation of housing to only those who are the most disadvantaged in our community'. Indeed, as Ruming (2011) has shown, objectors to dispersed affordable housing projects have frequently adapted the definition of 'concentration' to encompass anything more than one or two dwellings in a hundred. Ruming (2011) also shows how objectors often have little appreciation of, or interest in, the subtleties of housing management structures or subsidy arrangements, simply associating all subsidised or affordable housing projects with public housing. Goetz warns us that under conditions such as this, strategies to address poverty by dispersing social housing may be counterproductive:

> … the deconcentration argument provides the basis for low-poverty neighbourhoods to continue to oppose subsidized housing, by linking social pathologies to concentrated poverty, and concentrated poverty to subsidized housing. In the end, there is something perversely uniting about the deconcentration argument—it leads to almost universal resistance to subsidized housing. (Goetz 2004, p.7)

It is in this context of a society in which social housing has become both residualised and stigmatised that the series of policy and funding initiatives outlined in the previous chapter (Section 1.3) were introduced. The emphasis in these and other government policy directions in recent years has been on small-scale affordable housing development and dispersal, with NFP housing organisations and the private sector to take increasing responsibility for the actual delivery of affordable housing. All of this has meant that the new affordable housing being developed has increasingly been delivered by non-government developers on small or medium-sized sites in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods. Unfortunately, however, many proposed developments have encountered opposition from some existing community members who wish to keep such housing out of their neighbourhoods. Not only has this opposition often led to costly delays for developers and the abandonment of some projects, it has also in certain cases weakened political and public support for affordable housing more generally. This potentially threatens both de-concentration and private investment strategies for affordable housing.

2.2   What is community opposition?

Community opposition has historically been positioned as one of a number of potential responses to locally unwanted development. In this schema of 'locational conflict' (see Dear & Long 1978), the responses to unwanted development proposals can be categorised as:

Exit: leaving the area in the light of a proposed development.

Voice: protesting the proposed development, or even resorting to illegal activity (which can be considered a separate response).

Resignation: doing nothing, despite not wanting the proposed development.

Formal Participation: engaging in consultation processes. The distinction from 'voice' is that this response requires adequate opportunity for involvement to be initiated by the government.

In this schema, both the 'voice' and the 'formal participation' responses represent forms of community opposition to unwanted development proposals.

2.2.1 Defining community opposition

Community opposition to new building or infrastructure developments goes by many names, but is perhaps most commonly referred to in academic literature, the media and public life as 'NIMBYism'. So common is the term, it is often not necessary to outline that it is etymologically an acronym: from *not in my back-yard*. The term 'NIMBY', however, maintains a pejorative connotation in many contexts, consistent with its historical usage (Livezey 1980; Schively 2007), and is avoided in some literature as a result (see also Hubbard 2006; Wolsink 2006). Beyond connotation, the term NIMBY denotes a particular type of local opposition. Dear (1992, p.288) defines 'the NIMBY syndrome' as 'the protectionist attitudes of and oppositional tactics adopted by community groups facing an unwelcome development in their neighbourhood'. That is, NIMBYism can be seen as an inward-looking attitude among those living in close proximity to an unwelcome development proposal: they do not want that particular development near their home, even if they acknowledge that the development may serve an important purpose or that they may benefit from it. Either way, the preference for the NIMBY would be that the development takes place somewhere else.

In contrast to the inward-looking protectionist attitudes of NIMBYism, Feldman and Turner (2010) use the term NIABY (not in anyone's back yard) to describe a form of community opposition more generally concerned about a specific type of development and its impact on residents or communities, wherever located. The fact the opposition is local simply reflects the greater potential for impacts to affect the local community. For instance, someone opposing a proposal for a nuclear power station near their home may also object to that nuclear power station being built in another location; they would simply rather it was not built anywhere. A growing academic interest in the phenomenon of NIMBY protectionism since the 1980s has also seen a host of other associated acronyms spawned, most of which have relatively negative connotations (Schively 2007). These include BANANA (build absolutely nothing anywhere near anyone), NIMTOO (not in my term of office), NOPE (not on planet Earth) and CAVEs (citizens against virtually everything). Even the object of people's opposition has been given its own acronym; *locally unwanted land uses* are now frequently known as LULUs.

In this study, we use the term 'community opposition' to describe the oppositional tactics and actions of people and/or groups in response to unwelcome proposals for development, particularly affordable housing, in their local area. This use of 'local area' here is intentionally vague as the spread of the opposition to affordable housing inevitably varies in extent: sometimes it will just be from adjoining neighbours, at other times there may be hundreds of opponents across a large area. For the purposes of this study, the local area then represents the area within which opposition to affordable housing development has been encountered. Just because the opposition is focussed on a local area, this is not to say that the substance of the opposition is necessarily inward-looking and protectionist (although it may be), simply that it is focussed in certain geographical areas. While itself a contested and somewhat problematic term, community in this report refers to a geographical community of people living and/or working in the same locality, under a single government.

2.2.2 The participants in community opposition campaigns

A survey by the National Law Center (1997) asked 92 transitional housing providers in the USA where community opposition to their proposed projects originated.[1] The

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[1] Transitional housing is housing intended to facilitate the movement of homeless persons into permanent housing (National Law Centre 1997).

results indicated that residents are more likely than other members of the community to participate in community opposition campaigns. Twenty-seven per cent of providers surveyed reported that they only encountered opposition to proposed developments from residential neighbours, compared with 2 per cent reporting opposition from only commercial neighbours, and 7 per cent reporting opposition from both residential and commercial neighbours. Seventeen per cent of survey respondents reported that they had encountered opposition to proposed projects from local government authorities. In addition, Iglesias (2002) notes that groups from the media are also common opponents of affordable housing projects.

Dear (1992) cites survey results that suggest the typical profile of a local opposition activist is someone who is wealthy, highly educated and a homeowner, living in a large city or its suburbs. He states that the single best predictor of opposition, according to the survey results, is income, with the wealthy more likely to oppose a development proposal. This is consistent with Australian research that finds wealthier communities are more invested, and so more effectively engaged, in the planning process to protect local amenity and land values (Cook et al. 2012b; Taylor 2013). Galster et al. (2003) argue that although opposition to affordable housing development is not uniform, it tends to be strongest in relatively homogenous middle and upper income neighbourhoods, especially areas containing households with children. However, in the National Law Center survey (1997) discussed above, opposition to proposed transitional housing developments was found to be slightly more common in mixed-use neighbourhoods than in predominantly residential areas.

In a study of community opposition to various types of housing development (including market housing) in California, Pendall (1999) found that opposition to proposed housing developments is most likely where the proposal is located adjacent to a single family home. As he states:

> Projects adjacent to single-family housing were 28 per cent more likely to experience NIMBY protests than those adjacent to other sites … Projects adjacent to protected open space or parkland and those adjacent to established multi-family developments were 46 per cent and 26 per cent less likely, respectively, to generate NIMBY opposition. (Pendall 1999, p.130).

Schively (2007) notes that for those living closest to the site of a proposed LULU, the perceived costs associated with its development are generally higher, providing a motivation for opposition. In contrast, people living further away are less likely to be directly affected and their motivation for engaging in the opposition is consequently less. Tighe (2012) shows how this influences people's attitudes towards affordable housing. Her survey found that 78 per cent of people would support an affordable housing proposal in their *town*, but that only 66 per cent would support that affordable housing proposal in their *neighbourhood*. She concludes that perceptions of risk grow stronger as the unwanted land use moves closer (Tighe 2012).

Dear (1992) argues that a person's familiarity with human services facilities tends to increase their tolerance of them, in turn reducing the likelihood that they will oppose a proposal for a new facility. However, Takahashi and Dear (1997) also stress that this relationship should be seen to apply only to a limited extent: over-exposure to human services facilities or the saturation of a neighbourhood by such facilities may actually reduce acceptance among other community members. In their analysis of community attitudes towards human services facilities, Takahashi and Dear (1997) also find that community members in suburban locations may not actually be more rejecting than those in non-suburban locations, as is often supposed, and that there is geographical variation in levels of acceptance for certain types of human services facilities.

In summary, the literature suggests that opposition to affordable housing and other LULUs can originate from a variety of sources and is not uniform. However, the opposition is likely to be fiercest in areas that are wealthy and socially homogenous, where levels of homeownership are high and where single-family homes predominate. Opposition is also more likely to be generated from proximate neighbours and where there is little understanding of, or exposure to, the unwanted development type.

2.2.3 The forms of community opposition

The tactics adopted by opponents of affordable housing proposals vary. They include lodging formal objections with planning authorities, attending and speaking at council meetings, establishing activist groups, arranging petitions and public protests, legal proceedings, lobbying politicians and making attempts to attract media interest (Iglesias 2002). In a small number of cases, opponents may even resort to threats, intimidation and vandalism (Dear 1992; Galster et al. 2003). The National Law Center (1997) found that opposition to transitional housing in the majority of cases took the form of protests at public meetings or hearings (82% of cases) and/or neighbours voicing their discontent to public officials (58%). Opponents expressed concerns in the media in 30 per cent of cases and organised petitions in 21 per cent (National Law Center 1997).

One factor that can affect the form local opposition takes is the degree of maturation in the opposition movement. Dear (1992) identifies three distinct stages in the cycle of community opposition to unwelcome development proposals.

1. *Youth*: the first stage of the opposition follows the announcement of the proposal. At this stage, opposition tends to involve a relatively small and vocal group, often those living in closest proximity to the development site itself. The opposition is frequently emotionally-driven and expressed in blunt terms.

2. *Maturity*: in the second stage, two sides of the argument form and the debate moves from private complaints into public forums. The language and tactics used by opponents becomes more considered.

3. *Old age*: the conflict becomes drawn out and some kind of arbitration process may be adopted. Both sides may make concessions or a stalemate can ensue.

Throughout this three-stage cycle, the scale and ferocity of opposition can fluctuate. Dear (1992) suggests that in the first instance, community opposition to a proposal might be highly localised to immediate neighbours. This small group will then seek to mobilise a larger group of individuals, who share equivalent concerns, to oppose the same proposal. Press (2009) argues that the numbers objecting to a proposal for an unwelcome affordable housing development are often greatest in the early stages of the opposition campaign, tending to dwindle with time. Press (2009) and Zippay and Lee (2008) suggest that where a controversial development proposal proceeds in spite of community opposition, the post-occupancy stage is typically characterised by widespread acceptance or indifference among community members, with few (if any) concerns raised about negative externalities. We return to this claim in Section 2.4.

In some instances there may be existing community groups or networks that revolve around long-standing issues of local concern—such as heritage or ecology—that act as a foundation or starting point for community opposition to particular developments (Ruming et al. 2012). McClaren-Loring (2007) argues that there is an important relationship between the stability of the network of opponents to a proposed project and the level of success of that project in obtaining planning permission: if there is a stable and organised group of opponents to a proposed wind energy project, there is less chance that the planning assessment process will be straightforward and timely.

This is consistent with early research into responses to LULUs, which found that areas with active community groups have lower incidences of people leaving in face of unwanted development, and higher incidences of them fighting back instead (Oropesa 1989).

A second factor shaping the degree of opposition, and the tactics employed, is the planning process and political environment. Writing in the context of community opposition to wind energy development in northern Europe, McClaren-Loring (2007) finds that projects where there have been high levels of participatory planning are more likely to be publicly accepted. Dear (1992) highlights that opposition strategies and tactics in the USA have tended to focus on the zoning hearing.[2] This is the focus of opposition because zoning amendments are often necessary for LULUs to proceed, with the zoning hearing therefore providing an avenue for opponents to channel opposition into decision-making processes and foment opposition in the community.

The way that the claims of objectors are received, considered and acted upon by assessment authorities can also influence the opposition:

> The manner in which planners deal with NIMBY responses influences the viability of opposition activity and contributes to the success of LULU opponents in influencing development decision making. (Schively 2007, p.256).

Relatedly, Van Dijk and van der Wulp (2010) find a degree of opportunism from objectors to the loss of open space in the Netherlands—objectors use the legal system more often when a project is led by regional governments that are identified as less responsive to opposition than municipal governments.

Typically, neighbourhood petitions and objection letters will carry more weight as the numbers of people signing those petitions or sending letters increases. With respect to the number of formal submissions received against a development proposal, for example, planning assessment authorities will often place a controversial proposal under greater scrutiny than would be the case with a proposal attracting no controversy (this greater scrutiny may involve public meetings, site meetings, independent assessment or review, or the final decision being made by elected politicians rather than by planning officers under delegated powers). While the strength of the opposition may have a direct impact on the process of planning assessment, however, this does not necessarily mean that there will be a concurrent impact on assessment outcomes. As Abram (2000) notes in a discussion of planning process in southern Britain, some forms of objection are more effective than others:

> … submitting letters of objection on planning details rarely brought about changes [to planning outcomes]. Much more effective was the lobbying of politicians, who in turn were effective in their political manoeuvring. (Abram (2000, p.355)

In a similar vein, Iglesias (2002) notes that the most sophisticated opponents of affordable housing projects will often focus their oppositional efforts on decision-makers, while also gathering allies, attacking the development proponent, raising legal issues and trying to draw the attention of the media.

Nevertheless, the size of an opposition campaign will often have a bearing on its impact (or not) on assessment outcomes. As noted, a larger opposition campaign can attract the attention of the media and sway the opinions of local governments and

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[2] A zoning hearing is a public meeting arranged by planning authorities in order to discuss proposals to amend planning controls.

politicians. Mannarini et al. (2009) identify six key factors that nurture protest and can therefore be seen to help opponents of unwelcome development proposals garner broader support for an opposition campaign:

1. *Collective identity*: membership and/or identification with a particular group—a feeling of there being an 'us' and a 'them'.

2. *Sense of injustice*: the feeling of being wronged or suffering unequally. Often, the actor responsible for a person's sense of injustice can be identified.

3. *Collective efficacy*: the feeling of being able to influence outcomes through collective action. In contrast, feelings of helplessness discourage participation.

4. *Social embeddedness*: many people become involved in protests through knowing other people already involved in that protest.

5. *Social pressure exerted by the majority*: a perception that the majority of community members is against a given proposal can result in a person feeling pressured to conform and discouraged from expressing alternative viewpoints.

6. *Place attachment*: someone may engage in protestation because of an emotional attachment they have to a place that they perceive is threatened.

Of course, these six factors are not mutually exclusive, and several or all of them may be present in some cases. Their presence or lack of presence in a given locality may be a strong predictor of the level of push-back that an unwanted development proposal is likely to encounter. The mobilisation of a large group of objectors potentially has many benefits for opponents of a development proposal, most notably access to available in-kind and financial resources from within the community (McClymont & O'Hare 2008). The size and resources of the group can also affect the tactics used and their effectiveness, as well as the 'buy in' (or not) of broader stakeholder groups, such as the media and politicians.

Social psychologists Louis and Taylor (2002) argue that an individual's personal perceptions and judgements can be overridden by group norms. What this means is that individual members of a given group may have their attitudes, beliefs, ideologies, values and even behaviours influenced by the overall norms of that particular group. This is relevant to the discussion above because it suggests that where an individual identifies with a group from which other group members are mobilising in opposition to an affordable housing proposal (for instance a homeowner seeing their neighbour organising a petition), that individual may find themselves conforming with the group and participating in the opposition, even where they may not have done so alone.

Thornton and Knox (2002) consider the situational and dispositional factors that can underlie oppositional behaviour by NIMBY activists: that is, they consider the extent to which NIMBYism is a product of the situation faced by NIMBYs or their own personal traits. They identify several personal traits that have been suggested as being possible predictors of NIMBY-type reactions:

→ Selfism and lack of empathy: an over-riding concern with self-interest and a lack of concern for those who might be affected by their actions.

→ Impulsivity and psychological reactance: an inclination to behave impulsively and to resist perceived impositions on personal freedoms and control.

→ Need for cognition and assertion: a tendency to engage in effortful cognitive and problem-solving activities and some degree of assertiveness.

→ Locus of control and self-efficacy: a belief in a predictable and just world in which events are congruent with a person's actions, and a related belief that they have the ability to perform actions necessary to achieve the desired goal.

Thornton and Knox (2002) go on to test the extent to which these different personality traits can influence NIMBY responses through a hypothetical exercise with university students. In their study, however, they do not find compelling evidence in support of the claim of a *NIMBY personality*, at least not based on the above set of dispositions.

In summary, community opposition to unwanted development proposals can take a number of forms, with the strategies employed reflecting various related factors of the opposition itself: its maturation and degree of organisation; its size and spread; the (financial and non-financial) resources available; and the perceived effectiveness of various techniques at its disposal. These are, in turn, related to the details of the proposed LULU itself (particularly the extent of its perceived impacts), the responsiveness of the planning assessment process, and the characteristics of the host community. A number of factors have also been identified that may increase the likelihood that individuals will engage in opposition movements, including the strength of their attachment to a place, group norms and even specific personality traits.

2.2.4 The rationale of community opposition

In the next section we look at specific issues to do with affordable housing. First though, we reflect on literature seeking to explain the broader rationale behind community opposition, which has both economic and psychological underpinnings. In short, the argument is that neither economic concerns ('my property's value is at risk') nor psychological concerns ('I'm more at risk of being a victim of crime') adequately explains most opposition. Efforts have been made, therefore to encompass the variety of reasons for opposing a LULU under a single banner.

Devine-Wright (2009) proposes that NIMBYism can be thought of as a form of 'place-protective action' arising when proposed development disrupts pre-existing emotional attachments to place and/or threatens place-related identity processes. He proposes that such a conceptualisation of NIMBY-type reactions enables a deeper understanding of the social and psychological aspects driving oppositional behaviour. Devine-Wright (2009) suggests that there are five stages of psychological response to a proposed place change:

1. Becoming aware of change (what kind of place change will occur?)

2. Interpreting change (what are the implications of change for this place?)

3. Evaluating (will the outcomes of place change be positive or negative?)

4. Coping (how might I respond to place change?)

5. Acting (what can I do about it?)

He argues that a person's attachment to place and the links between their own identity and place-identity will have an influence at all five of these stages. In terms of becoming aware and interpreting change, a person who is strongly attached to a place, in contrast with someone who is not, could be expected to take an active interest in what is going on locally and to carefully consider the likely impact of a proposed change (both in physical and social terms). Where that person evaluates that the outcomes of the change would be significant and negative, they may see the change as a threat to the place, or to their own sense of familiarity with that place, possibly triggering coping strategies and actions that include oppositional behaviour.

Purcell (2001) similarly suggests a politics of space (which he uses in a general sense that incorporates 'place' as used above) is at play with much local opposition. He suggests spatial politics are able to incorporate complex and disparate social concerns that can be overlooked or oversimplified if examined solely through a particular economic or social lens (e.g. class or age or race). Martin (2003) also feels

that the construction of particular (selective) socio-spatial identities of a neighbourhood, which she calls 'place frames', can help garner broader support from a wider population for an opposition movement. That is, while there might be differences in the social or economic reasoning behind an individual's opposition to a particular LULU, these can be subsumed into a common place frame that becomes the subject for protective action among broader opposition movements.

The extent of the transgression a LULU represents, the threat to a place, is a function of both the physical and social aspects of a place. Wilton (1998) uses a psychoanalytical framework to explain how a transgression will be perceived as higher if it is physically closer or more physically different (e.g. it is a greater departure from the existing physical form) or if it is more socially different from some perceived norm. This goes some way to explain the greater extent of opposition to affordable housing (particularly at higher densities) in wealthier and more homogenous neighbourhoods.

Stein (1996) argues that many of the strategies and justifications of opposition campaigns are coping strategies to resolve the moral dilemma of the disconnect between various social aspects of the opposition. On the one hand, affordable housing may offend the objector's ideological commitment to hard-work and self-determination, while also triggering uneasiness about welfare dependency and worthiness. On the other hand, opposing affordable housing development violates their ethical duty to help those weaker than themselves. Stein (1996) identifies several strategies taken by objectors when presented with this moral dilemma (i.e. where they want to halt a proposed affordable housing development without being seen to be selfish and/or malevolent):

→ Objectors may claim simply to be expressing concerns about specific issues to do with the development (e.g. parking or design), rather than opposing an entire project. This shifts blame to the development proponent.

→ Objectors may claim that they have been forced to object because the proposed development will have such an adverse impact on the neighbourhood and/or community.

→ Sophisticated objectors may 'cloak themselves in compassion, claiming that the only reason they oppose a development is because the proposal doesn't meet the underlying needs of the target population' (Stein 1996, pp.34–35).

→ Objectors may claim that their continued opposition and unco-operative attitude is simply retribution for the way that the project proponent has behaved through the planning and development process (for instance the proponent may be perceived by objectors as having behaved secretively, arrogantly, or to have lied or misled them).

2.3 Factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects

In the academic literature on the phenomenon of community opposition, the types of unwanted development being opposed can be grouped into four broad categories:

1. Environmental infrastructure, for example waste facilities and nuclear and wind energy infrastructure (see Livezey 1980; Devine-Wright 2009).

2. Social services, such as the sometimes-overlapping services for homelessness, drug rehabilitation, AIDS, low-cost housing and mental health (see Takahashi & Dear 1997; Oakley 2002; Cowan 2003; Karsten 2012).

3. Urban intensification or densification, involving an expansion of an urban area into green spaces, or increases in residential population densities and the mix of land

uses within established urban areas (see Searle & Filion 2010; Sturzaker 2010; Powe & Hart 2011).

4. Culturally and racially specific facilities, for instance those for immigrants and refugees and, although not to as great an extent, mosques or churches (see Maney & Abraham 2009; Abraham & Maney 2012).

Affordable housing, which in many cases accommodates lower income households, perhaps best fits under 'social services', the second category. However, this is complicated by the fact that in some cases, affordable housing development also represents land use 'intensification' (category 3) and disproportionately houses certain racial or ethnic groups (category 4). As such, the development of affordable housing can be seen to represent something of a 'perfect storm', falling as it does under three of the four categories of development types most commonly opposed. Given that this is the case, and that there is great variety in terms of the physical form, location, management and occupancy of affordable housing projects, it seems reasonable to expect that the factors triggering community opposition to affordable housing proposals will similarly be complex and that the opposition will not be a singular discourse from one homogenous group (Pendall 1999; Ruming et al. 2012).

Dear (1992) argues that objections to human services facilities in the USA have traditionally centred on three main areas of concern: a perceived threat to property values, personal security and neighbourhood amenity. These findings are echoed in the National Law Center (1997) study. It found that a fear of declining property values (61% of cases), increased crime (61%) and worsening traffic and/or parking problems (39%) were the most commonly cited concerns for resident objectors to transitional housing projects, with issues around noise, the appearance of new buildings and the characteristics of future tenants also raised as issues.

Reviewing the literature on the topic, Tighe (2010) suggests that the concerns triggering community opposition to affordable housing have most often been a reputation of poor maintenance, fears about increased crime and declining property values, the appearance of buildings and a sense that housing programs are state giveaways. In a paper on strategies for mitigating or addressing local opposition to affordable housing, Iglesias (2002) distinguishes between seven common bases for community concern about affordable housing development in the US context; a lack of information/misinformation, fear of negative impacts (property values, crime, design etc.), complaints about development process, prejudice or bias against prospective residents, conflicting interests regarding land use concerns (parking, traffic), value conflicts (anti-development, opposed to the use of government funds to subsidise housing for low-income groups), and issues unrelated to the development (e.g. general anger towards local government or the developer).

For Nguyen, Basolo et al. (2012), debates over the siting and construction of affordable housing can be seen to typically revolve around three main issues: neighbourhood effects; the characteristics of 'imagined' tenants; and architectural design. Adapting these three issues slightly to incorporate certain additional issues raised by Iglesias (2002), we believe that the existing literature on the topic indicates that community opposition to proposed affordable housing projects generally centres on one or more of the following three areas of concern:

1. *Potential impacts on host neighbourhood*: the potential effects of the proposed development on crime, property values and other valued aspects or features of the wider neighbourhood.

2. *Characteristics of tenants*: concerns about the types, characteristics and behaviours of people who are likely to live in the proposed affordable housing project.

3. *Built form and planning process*: the physical form (e.g. bulk, style, density) of the proposed project and the process for planning assessment.

Below, we use this three-fold categorisation to discuss in more detail the range of concerns typically raised by opponents of affordable housing development. Of course, the three issues above rarely exist independent of one another and frequently overlap; a person may be concerned about the type of tenants who will live in a proposed affordable housing project *because* they fear that those tenants are likely to engage in criminal activity, or they may be concerned about the physical form of a project because they fear it would be unsightly and may devalue their property. It is also important to stress at this point that most studies of the factors underlying opposition to affordable housing are based on research from the USA, and that it does not necessarily follow that the same range of issues will be applicable in Australian cities.

2.3.1 Potential impacts on host neighbourhood

Any development, whether it is affordable housing or not, can generate negative externalities that potentially impact quality of life and amenity for the people living or working close by. Opponents of proposed affordable housing projects frequently cite concerns about the potential impact of a development on neighbourhood quality of life, claiming that the development will result in an increase in crime, traffic and/or noise, that it will create or worsen problems with parking, or that it will be poorly maintained (Dear 1992; Hogan 1996; National Law Center 1997; Galster et al. 2003). In studies of opposition to affordable housing in the US, these quality of life measures have consistently emerged as the concerns most commonly cited by objectors. The prevalence of such concerns, particularly for neighbours, can be seen to be partly to do with fears that their quality of life and/or amenity will deteriorate as a direct result of development and partly to do with the likely economic consequences of such a deterioration, as reflected in property values.

For Galster et al. (2003), property values can be understood as a proxy for the whole bundle of characteristics and features that influence the overall quality of life and mix of amenities in a neighbourhood. The logic here is that people will be willing to pay a high price for a property in a neighbourhood that has little crime, traffic or noise, and few problems with parking. Any negative impact on those desirable characteristics, for example through the development of a new traffic-generating affordable housing project, will be reflected in property values through a reduction in the price that a person would be willing to pay for that property. Galster et al. (2003) term homeowner fears about declining property values as 'economic reasons' for opposing affordable housing development; as well as fearing that a new affordable housing development will have a direct impact on their quality of life, objectors may also fear that this decline in quality of life will reduce property values. Duke (2010) found that 76 per cent of homeowners believed the development of apartment complexes with rent-subsidised residents would lower their property values, while Tighe (2012) found that 62 per cent believed that the construction of affordable housing in their neighbourhood would lower their property values.

For Fischel (2001), such forms of economic homeowner opposition can be seen as a rational response, not to the expected outcomes of a proposed development, but to the potential effects that a worst-case-scenario outcome could have on the value of their main asset: the home. He attributes the prevalence of community opposition in the USA to the fact that there is no way to insure a person's home against adverse

neighbourhood effects that may result from new development, potentially reducing its value. He suggests that there is a form of insurance that may reduce such concerns:

> Here is the insurance contract that would do the trick [of reducing economic concerns]: In the event that the insured's property does not rise by the amount that it would have had the development not taken place, the insurer will pay the owner the difference at the time the owner of the property (or his heirs or legatees) chooses to sell it. Once this difference is paid, the succeeding owner acquires no further claim for adverse effects of the development on the property. The reason the purchaser has no further claim after the insurance claim has been paid to the seller is that the purchaser has been compensated for the adverse effect in the form of the lower price of the house. (Fischel 2001, p.148)

Concerns for objectors about the likely effects of a proposed affordable housing project on quality of life and property values can be compounded by a fear that the development may set a precedent for further affordable housing development in the future. The over-concentration of affordable housing is a commonly-raised concern for objectors (Ruming 2011); the idea that the addition of an affordable housing development to an area will create 'ghettoes' because of the high concentration of disadvantaged tenants, or that it will 'open the flood gates' to further developments of the same type. There are links between such fears and the extensive literature on neighbourhood or area 'effects'; defined by Atkinson and Kintrea (2001, p.2278) as the net change in the contribution to life-chances made by living in one area rather than another. Many attempts have been made in the US and Europe to test whether lower-income groups experience poorer life chances living in an area of concentrated poverty, as opposed to living in a more socially-mixed area (ibid.; see also Galster 2012 for a comprehensive review). In relation to area effects, there is particular interest in the possibility that 'threshold effects' can be identified; tipping points (for instance in unemployment or poverty rates) beyond which a neighbourhood's decline accelerates (Galster et al. 2000).

2.3.2 Characteristics of tenants

The second key issue identified by Nguyen, Basolo et al. (2012) in debates around affordable housing development is to do with the imagined characteristics of the people that objectors imagine will ultimately live in the project. Often these objections will be based on the individual prejudices and beliefs of opponents, rather than the potential impacts of a development on quality of life or property values. Within these 'noneconomic' arguments against an affordable housing proposal (Galster et al. 2003), an objector may not want a development in their neighbourhood because they consider that residents of affordable housing are lazy, non-productive, deviant or unworthy, because they object in principle to government-subsidised housing, or because they believe it would be unfair that people receiving welfare payments could then live in the same street or neighbourhood as they do.

Noneconomic objections to affordable housing development are generally emotional and/or ideological, rather than being rational in nature, and often they are founded in broader stigma associated with non-productivity and social 'difference'. Writing in the context of community opposition to LULUs, Dear (1992) suggests that while certain forms of social difference are easily tolerated and therefore widely acceptable, there are others that provoke revulsion. He gives the example of groups such as the elderly and people with physical disabilities whose entry to a community in a new-build facility would perhaps be acceptable, in principle, to the majority of existing residents. These acceptable forms of difference he places in contrast with ex-criminals and drug addicts, whose entry to that same community more people would find unacceptable.

In a further development of this work, Takahashi and Dear (1997) construct a 'hierarchy of acceptance' in relation to a range of human service clients and facilities. What their hierarchy measures is a continuum of perceived threat: the more acceptable clients and facilities are perceived as less threatening by host communities and vice versa. Their findings suggest that, across the United States, group homes for people with AIDS, mental disabilities and mental health issues are, on the whole, the least acceptable human services facilities to prospective host communities, while nursing homes for the elderly are some of the most acceptable. Although Takahashi and Dear (1997) stress that community attitudes towards different types of clients and facilities are highly variable and prone to fluctuation, the type of difference or deviance attributed to prospective residents of a proposed development can be a strong predictor of the level of opposition that a given proposal is likely to encounter (ibid.; Galster et al. 2003; van Alphen et al. 2010).

A common fear for objectors to affordable housing development is that crime or antisocial behaviour would increase as a result of development. Research by Duke (2010) in the USA found that 71 per cent of homeowners believed that the construction of apartment complexes with rent-subsidised residents would lead to an increase in crime. This research also revealed that the survey respondents who were most likely to support the de-concentration of affordable housing through relocation strategies were less likely to think that subsidised housing would adversely affect their neighbourhoods and believed more in equal rights and affirmative action (Duke 2010). In the US, it has been argued that opposition to affordable housing can be related to racial prejudice: many more whites own their homes than do blacks or Hispanics (Pendall 1999), and often white homeowners will resist the introduction of affordable housing projects to their neighbourhood partly because they fear that the tenants will be from minority groups (ibid.; Koebel et al. 2004; Tighe 2010; Duke 2010). Affordable housing tenants may also be seen as undeserving or different, and may be associated with particular racial or ethnic minorities (Nguyen et al. 2012).

Tighe (2010, 2012) argues that opposition to affordable housing projects is often based on misperceptions, values and deep-seated ideologies, as well as stereotypes of the people who will ultimately live in those projects. For her, concerns about issues such as parking, property values and crime rates are often publicly professed concerns used by objectors of affordable housing projects to disguise their privately-held prejudices about likely residents (Tighe 2010). As she suggests:

> … local opposition, which often successfully thwarts the development of affordable housing, is often based on misperceptions and stereotypes of the people who may live there. Such opposition is seldom grounded in the reality of modern affordable housing but shaped by perceptions of public housing and the negative externalities that it produced. (Tighe 2010, p.10)

Related to this, Koebel et al. (2004) suggest that the term 'affordable housing', in the US at least, has become a code-word for publicly assisted housing, now often conjuring images of failed public housing in the public's mind. Goetz (2008) shows that in response to negative images conjured by the term 'affordable housing', advocates of affordable housing have used alternative terms such as 'lifecycle housing' and 'workforce housing'. He reports the findings of a community satisfaction survey in which Minneapolis residents were asked a question about housing policy, along with other questions on city services, traffic and so on. On the housing policy question, half of residents received a form of the question using the term 'affordable housing' and half received the same question with the term 'lifecycle housing' substituted for 'affordable housing'. The wording of the original question was:

'Affordable housing' is a term used to describe a range of housing options for people at different stages of the life-cycle or with different incomes or housing needs. It includes lower-cost homes, apartments, and senior housing. Do you support or oppose the construction of more affordable housing in [name of city]? (Goetz 2008, p.224)

In the alternative form of the question, the term 'affordable housing' was replaced with the term 'lifecycle housing'.

Among those who were asked the 'affordable housing' version of the question, 43 per cent expressed support, while 49 per cent were opposed and 8 per cent offered no opinion (Goetz 2008, p.225). For those who were asked the 'lifecycle housing' version of the question, 55 per cent expressed support and only 37 per cent were in opposition, with 8 per cent again offering no opinion. Goetz (2008) also found that the negative reaction to the term 'affordable housing' was particularly common among non-Hispanic whites. Goetz concludes from these results that *words do matter*: a change in the terms used to describe affordable housing can result in a significant shift in public opinion.

2.3.3 Built form and planning process

As well as the characteristics of the host community and likely future residents of affordable housing projects, the size and physical appearance of proposed buildings can influence the level of community opposition (Pendall 1999; Tighe 2010). Dear (1992) and Hogan (1996) argue that all else being equal, a large human services or affordable housing project will be less acceptable to host communities than a small one because it is likely to be more visually obtrusive and to have more externalities.

Hogan (1996) reports that many affordable housing providers in the US choose to acquire or rehabilitate existing single-family properties or small multi-unit blocks, rather than constructing new buildings. This is because the former type of developments avoid the stigma attached to public housing, blend in well with their surroundings, and because their rehabilitation can actually result in an improvement to the physical appearance of a neighbourhood that is welcomed by neighbours. In contrast, new development projects are frequently seen by providers to be more challenging because they are more visible to neighbours and more likely to affect the appearance of an area. The National Law Center's study (1997), discussed above, found that concerns about the appearance of proposed transitional housing projects were cited by objectors in over 20 per cent of cases where developments had been opposed.

Another issue frequently raised by objectors to proposed affordable housing projects concerns the maintenance of the property once it has been constructed. An important contributor to the physical appearance of any building, there is often a perception among objectors that affordable housing projects will be poorly maintained (Tighe 2010). Maintenance, management and the reputation of the affordable housing developer can all influence the extent to which a proposal is, or is not, acceptable to a host community (Dear 1992; Hogan 1996).

In Australia, the degree of community acceptance of new affordable housing projects must also be viewed in the context of broader debates about urban consolidation. Planning policy in all major cities currently supports a move towards more compact cities through dual strategies of urban containment and urban intensification (Randolph 2004; Forster 2006), but proposals for higher density development are frequently opposed, often on the basis that a proposed development is 'inappropriate' or that the 'character' of a street or neighbourhood would be damaged or destroyed as a result (Lewis 1999; Huxley 2002; Davison 2011; Ruming et al. 2012). Because

character is inherently both social and spatial (Davison & Rowden 2012), community opposition to a development proposal on the grounds that it comprises the wrong types of buildings can become a cover for opposition to that proposal because it will house the wrong types of people. As affordable housing development often takes the form of medium-density and multi-unit projects, it may be difficult to separate opposition to higher-density development from opposition to affordable housing development.

In addition to concerns about the physical form of buildings, the planning assessment process may also have a bearing on community attitudes towards a proposed affordable housing development. Dear (1992) and Hogan (1996) note that two main approaches to community engagement have traditionally been adopted by human services and affordable housing providers in residential neighbourhoods:

→ Low-profile: providers seek to attract as little attention to a development as possible by minimising planning hurdles and community consultation requirements.

→ High-profile: housing developers may seek to adopt a high-profile approach, in which they purposely engage and educate members of the host community.

Dear (1992) argues that the low-profile approach is risky. For instance, if news of a secretive development proposal does leak to local community members then they may be both more resentful and more fearful than they would have been had they been informed at the outset, possibly intensifying their opposition to the proposal. Both Dear (1992) and Hogan (1996) show that, in an effort to reduce the likelihood of community opposition to their development proposals, human services and affordable housing providers in the US have sometimes sought out low-risk locations where opposition is unlikely. This, unfortunately, may mean that developments tend to be located in non-residential areas or in a small number of places of least resistance, with the latter potentially creating a clustering effect.

Where community opposition is seen by government agencies as being potentially obstructive or illegitimate, planning assessment processes may be altered to reduce or even remove the opportunity for community involvement at the planning stage. The narrative typically used to justify this is that community opposition to a development proposal is purely about the objector's self-interest and exhibits ignorance of the broader societal need for the development: objectors may be labelled 'selfish obstructionists' (Gibson 2005) and have their concerns dismissed as NIMBYism by development proponents or government agencies that wish to undermine what may, in fact, be legitimate arguments (Gibson 2005; Wolsink 2006, 2007). As Stein (1996, pp.34–35) states of affordable housing development:

> Some project sponsors, however, are eager to condemn all opponents as 'NIMBYs'. They believe that categorically describing all opponents as racists or selfish protectionists somehow eliminates any obligation to address citizens' concerns. By characterizing all opponents as NIMBYs, some project sponsors may hope to dismiss community concerns about perfectly reasonable issues, such as design, construction, or operation of the facility.

Sometimes, however, this pejorative labelling of community objectors as NIMBYs and the dismissal of legitimate concerns as self-protectionism may intensify the opposition.

Looking at community opposition to various forms of housing development in California, Pendall (1999) finds that the more burdensome the planning assessment process (the greater the number of discretionary processes involved in the planning assessment process), the more likely it is that a proposal will attract controversy. He

also shows that affordable housing projects assessed under streamlined planning processes, in his sample, generated less controversy than the average housing project, even though it might be expected that affordable housing projects would generate more. He argues that this provides hope for affordable housing advocates and suggests that a strategy for reducing community opposition to affordable housing might be for governments to consider zoning land for multi-unit development and expediting planning assessment for affordable housing proposals, with assessment possibly being made by an independent panel rather than council officials.

2.4 Identified impacts of affordable housing development on host neighbourhoods

As we discussed above, objectors to affordable housing proposals often cite concerns about the impact that the development would have on neighbourhood quality of life and property values. There is a growing body of literature, particularly in North America, that seeks to test the extent to which these perceived impacts of affordable housing projects materialise (Goetz et al. 1996; Galster et al. 2002; Galster et al. 2003; Nguyen 2005; Ellen 2007; Ellen et al. 2007; Albright et al. 2011; Edmiston 2011) or, in some instances, are offset by positive impacts (Jason et al. 2008).

2.4.1 Property values

As mentioned in Section 2.3.1, property values can be seen as a proxy for overall quality of life in a neighbourhood: if the quality of life in a neighbourhood is harmed due to an increase in traffic, crime or noise (or anything else), this will be reflected in the price that someone would be willing to pay for a property in that neighbourhood. Various studies of the effects of affordable housing development on property values have been conducted, using a range of models, especially in the USA. As well as the effects on property values of diminishing neighbourhood quality of life, some commentators point to the effect that proposals for affordable housing development can potentially have in prompting 'panic selling', as fearful owners compete to list and sell their homes, thereby discounting prices (de Souza Briggs et al. 1999).

In their study of the effects of affordable housing development on property values in Minneapolis neighbourhoods, Goetz et al. (1996) found that while affordable housing developed by not-for-profit developers had the effect of enhancing property values in surrounding areas, the development of public housing and publicly-subsidised privately-owned affordable housing had a slight negative impact. Galster et al. (1999) look at whether sales prices of single-family homes in Baltimore County in the early 1990s were affected by proximity to rent-assisted households. Their findings suggest that small numbers of rent-assisted households can actually have positive externalities in higher-valued, appreciating neighbourhoods, but that larger numbers of rent-assisted households in more 'vulnerable' neighbourhoods can have deleterious effects on property values. Santiago et al. (2001) find similar effects for dispersed public housing sites in Denver, and attribute at least some of the positive effects to the Denver Housing Authority's emphasis on rehabilitating vacant buildings; the rehabilitation of these vacant buildings (many of which would previously have been an eyesore) had a positive effect on neighbouring property values.

Pulling together their research from Baltimore County and Denver, Galster et al. (2003) conclude that the presence of assisted housing sites generally does not lower single-family property values, but that the concentration of larger numbers of assisted housing projects, particularly in vulnerable neighbourhoods, can have deleterious effects. They suggest that the source of any positive externalities from assisted housing sites lies in building renovations and good property management, while the

principal negative externalities concern poor maintenance or management, the uncivil or illegal behaviours of tenants and the class-prejudices of home buyers.

Examining the effects of subsidised rental housing on property values in New York, Ellen (2007) and Ellen et al. (2007) conclude that their research fails to support the notion that subsidised rental housing will depress property values, with the effects on property values likely to differ depending on where that housing is built, its scale, the characteristics of its tenants, and the nature of ownership and management. They propose that rather than assuming that the spill-over effects of subsidised rental housing on property values will be negative, both positive and negative spill-over effects are possible. These spill-over effects they identify as follows:

→ Removal effect: the impact of subsidised rental housing on property values depends on what it removes from a neighbourhood.

→ Physical structure effect: a new development that is unsightly or poorly maintained may depress property values, while one that is attractive and well maintained can have a positive effect.

→ Market effects: by signalling that an area is viable, the development of subsidised rental housing may allay developer fears about investing in a neighbourhood, prompting investment. However, new subsidised housing may also glut the market with low-cost housing and crowd out unsubsidised housing, with possible knock-on effects for property values.

→ Population growth effect: the development of new subsidised housing is likely to increase the local population. While this may improve safety and boost the local economy, it may over-stretch services and infrastructure.

→ Population mix effects: the characteristics of future residents and the concentration of subsidised housing in the wider area can potentially create either positive or negative effects.

In their review of the literature on the neighbourhood impacts of subsidised housing, Freeman and Botein (2002) similarly find that the existing evidence from the USA strongly suggests that the presence of affordable housing in a place can have both positive and negative impacts on property values in surrounding areas: the type of impact will differ according to context. Nguyen (2005) examined 17 studies from the US that have attempted to measure the effect of affordable housing development on property values, including those discussed above. She also suggests that the research to date has not provided a conclusive answer as to whether property values are adversely affected by its proximity to affordable housing, *per se* (Nguyen 2005). While property values can, in some circumstances, be harmed by affordable housing development, the negative effects are generally small where they exist. Nguyen (2005) goes further to identify a range of factors that either increase or decrease the likelihood that property values will be adversely impacted by affordable housing development:

The likelihood that property values will decline as a result of proximity to affordable housing increases when (1) the quality, design and management of the affordable housing is poor; (2) affordable housing is located in dilapidated neighbourhoods that contain disadvantaged populations …; and (3) when affordable housing residents are clustered. In contrast, instances in which affordable housing appears to have no effect occur when (1) affordable housing is sited in healthy and vibrant neighbourhoods, (2) the structure of the affordable housing does not change the quality or character of the neighbourhood, (3) the management of affordable housing is responsive to

problems and concerns, and (4) affordable housing is dispersed. (Nguyen 2005, p.24)

What we can conclude from the existing literature is that the effects of affordable housing development on property values can be positive, negative or neutral, and that the type of association present is likely to be strongly influenced by factors relating to property design and management, the characteristics of the host neighbourhood and the clustering (or not) of affordable housing in that area. We run our own tests for the effects of affordable housing development in the Australian context, in Chapter 7.

2.4.2 Crime

In the US literature on community opposition to affordable housing development, fears about an increase in crime are commonly raised by objectors. In their study of the impacts of small-scale dispersed public housing in Denver, Santiago et al. (2003) find no evidence that the development of these sites was associated with increased rates of reported violent, property, criminal mischief, disorderly conduct or total crimes in the vicinity. However, they do point out that all of these developments were located in areas that did not have either concentrated poverty or above-average crime rates when development occurred (Santiago et al. 2003, p.2160). However, Galster et al. (2002) found that while supportive housing facilities were not themselves identified as a major source of criminal activity, there was a marked increase in crime around the larger facilities. They suggested that this may be a result of residents themselves being victims of crime or the size of the facility making it difficult to maintain collective efficacy in the neighbourhood. In a study of the impacts of the development of subsidised housing on neighbourhoods in Minneapolis, Goetz et al. (1996) also found no supporting evidence for the fears that subsidised housing developments would increase crime.

2.4.3 Attitudes towards an opposed development

Despite the opposition that affordable housing proposals frequently encounter from community members, there is evidence that, once a facility is developed, opposition tends to fall away and neighbours generally make few complaints about the new development or its occupants (Santiago et al. 2003; Zippay & Lee 2008; Tighe 2010). This could be because the impacts are not as bad as was originally feared, or because people simply see no point in proceeding with the opposition. In Australia, Press (2009) found that community negativity towards affordable housing projects in Melbourne typically diminished with time. In Chapter 7, we report the findings of our own post-entry interview-surveys with residents living close to affordable housing projects in Sydney that were controversial when they were originally proposed, but which have now been completed and occupied.

2.5 Mitigating and addressing local opposition

In his discussion of strategies for addressing the problem of local opposition to affordable housing development, Iglesias (2002) argues that two complementary sets of strategies are needed:

→ Communitywide strategies that help change the broader environment in which affordable housing is being delivered.

→ Project-specific strategies aimed at obtaining planning approval in the face of opposition to an affordable housing proposal.

Below, we use this broad two-fold framework to discuss the various ways in which it has been suggested, in the literature, that community opposition to affordable housing development can be mitigated or addressed.

2.5.1 Communitywide strategies

Iglesias (2002) identifies a range of strategies that can be adopted in an effort to help create an environment that is more accepting of, and conducive to, affordable housing development. Mostly, these involve education, public relations and changes to planning regulations.

Education and public relations: education and public relations campaigns can be used to inform decision-makers, community leaders, the media and the general public about both affordable housing needs and successful solutions (Iglesias 2002). These campaigns can use television, radio, print media, general mailings and/or leafleting, with an effort made to increase familiarity and understanding of the client group, hopefully increasing tolerance and acceptance as a result (Dear 1992).

Nguyen et al. (2012) assert that the social construction of affordable housing tenants is as 'deviant' and 'undeserving', and is shaped by prejudices about race/ethnicity, class and immigrant status; in short affordable housing tenants are seen as 'different'. Tighe (2012) argues that fears about the types of people who might reside in an affordable housing project are primary factors driving concerns about, and opposition to, affordable housing. In the public mind, affordable housing is often stigmatized (Jacobs et al. 2011), with the images of dysfunctional public housing estates still permeating public attitudes towards affordable housing more broadly (Koebel et al. 2004; Goetz 2008). As noted above, a study by Goetz (2008) showed that members of the public are generally more supportive of 'lifecycle housing' than 'affordable housing'.

Negative sentiments about affordable housing can be tempered by positive messages (Nguyen et al. 2012). A concerted effort to respond to myths and misunderstandings about affordable housing through education and public relations campaigns can be a way of dispelling the concerns about possible impacts that often generate local opposition. Tighe (2010) contends that planners need to develop strategies to control the dialogue surrounding affordable housing. This may include developing a media strategy to combat negative stereotypes in the media (see Jacobs et al. 2011), with governments and affordable housing developers making a concerted effort to get positive stories about affordable housing into the media as often as possible (Galster et al. 2003). At the very least, it might be that government planners and/or politicians engage in a discussion about affordability and the need for affordable housing in the neighbourhood and among local people.

Education and public relations campaigns should be tailored to their audience, emphasising the positive aspects of affordable housing development (Tighe 2010), for instance their economic impact (construction jobs, new employees for the local area) and effect in improving the appearance of an area (especially where the redevelopment of unsightly buildings is involved). Research by Tighe (2012) suggests that many community members do see much value in affordable housing and that these positive perceptions need to be reinforced in educational and public relations campaigns. Galster et al. (2003) suggest that a key strategy aimed at minimising opposition to affordable housing development can be for affordable housing providers to develop constructive ongoing relationships with community and resident groups, as well as other local opinion leaders. By building and maintaining these relationships, potential objectors can be turned into supporters and advocates.

In addition to addressing negative perceptions of affordable housing projects and residents, educational and public relations campaigns can be used to moderate broader ideological objections to the provision of housing subsidy by government. As discussed above, objections to affordable housing may be related to these ideological

objections, rather than an objection to the proposed project itself or the introduction of affordable housing residents to an area. That is, the objector may be opposed to the subsidisation of housing by government altogether, rather than simply being opposed to a particular development proposal. In seeking to address such an opinion, emphasis in education or public relations campaigns for affordable housing should re-frame affordable housing as a means of achieving equality of opportunity for tenants (implying that tenants are upwardly-mobile) or achieving economic or other benefits for a neighbourhood, rather than being a welfare intervention (Tighe 2012).

In addition, evidence of the effects of affordable housing on host areas (or lack thereof) can also be used to allay community concerns about affordable housing development (Galster et al. 2002). As Press (2009) notes, however, such data should be used carefully as in 'an adversarial or highly charged meeting the [statistics from different areas] can be seen as dismissing the concerns of surrounding residents who in turn will dismiss the relevance of the findings'.

Takahashi and Dear (1997) note that a widespread assumption about community rejection of human services facilities has been that ignorance is a primary source of the perceived threat. The corollary of this is that more knowledge about, familiarity with, and exposure to, the client group is likely to reduce anxieties for community members and therefore minimise opposition. It has been suggested that personal contact can alleviate anxiety around certain groups, which in turn may assist in successful social integration into existing neighbourhoods (Press 2009; van Alphen et al. 2010). In some cases this can be led by the affordable housing provider (Pendall 1999) or developer (Iglesias 2002) themselves. Takahashi and Dear (1997) note, however, that the relationship between a community's level of exposure to clients and acceptance of those clients is not this straightforward in reality. They suggest that while limited exposure may increase acceptance, continuous exposure may actually reduce community acceptance of human services facilities.

A key issue for consideration in educational and public relations campaigns is that people opposing affordable housing development often will not trust governments and housing developers who claim that a proposal will not harm the host neighbourhood. It is therefore crucial that positive messages also come from people that *are* trusted by potential objectors to affordable housing (e.g., from community members living in other neighbourhoods where there are examples of affordable housing development that was opposed originally but has since been accepted). It is difficult and will take time to shift negative perceptions of affordable housing in the public mind, and it may therefore be prudent to target educational and public relations efforts at 'decision-makers' (Iglesias 2002) such as planners and local politicians, or at prominent and well-connected members of the community.

Planning process: as noted above, opposition to affordable housing development can be generated or exacerbated by distrust in, or disillusionment with, the planning assessment process. In addition, planning controls can themselves make it difficult to deliver affordable housing, for instance by proscribing minimum setbacks and lot widths, or by prohibiting multi-unit buildings (Gurran et al. 2007; Davison et al. 2012). In these circumstances, changes to planning regulations can eliminate measures that prevent affordable housing development.

Distrust in the planning assessment process often stems from a perception that the decision-making process is flawed (Cowan 2003; Schively 2007; Press 2009). Schively (2007, p.262), citing Deng (2003), states:

Despite its intended function, it is recognized that uncertainty in the political processes associated with the implementation of land use regulation is one of the key reasons for NIMBY responses.

Supporting the idea that a politicised process is less trusted is Pendall's (1999) observation that development applications requiring approval from elected members of local government are contested more often than projects approved by an unelected planning commission. It has also been suggested that inclusionary zoning can help reduce local opposition by making the affordable housing requirement transparent and consistent everywhere (Nguyen et al. 2012).

A key issue is the perception that the planning system gives certain groups more power than others. There is a procedural element in the siting and design of affordable housing igniting opposition. Typically the former is a top-down process, and the decision supporting the selection of the site is made without discussion with those residents in the community. Housing provision in general is highly political and it involves negotiations with various interest groups, including developers, each vying for their interests (Jacobs et al. 2011), which may be at odds with good siting and design decisions. Other community members can find it difficult to either have their interests heard (Versteeg & Hajer 2010, p.169), or are only heard at a point in the process that is too late for a genuine discussion. In some cases, labeling local opposition as short-sighted NIMBYism is used to justify the removal of democratic processes and to streamline approval processes (Gibson 2005).

There are two opposing schools of thought when it comes to questions about the appropriate level of community engagement in planning for affordable housing:

1. More community engagement means a greater chance of opposition to a proposal arising.

2. Extensive and sustained community engagement can help engender support for an affordable housing proposal, reducing opposition.

Research has found that public notification of development proposals can actually prompt greater degrees of opposition than would otherwise have occurred and that streamlining planning assessment processes for affordable housing projects can reduce community opposition (Pendall 1999; Zippay & Lee 2008), while Karsten (2012) shows that non-participatory processes can be used by governments to deliver essential human services facilities, irrespective of the level of community opposition.

In contrast to the mostly negative perception of NIMBYism, however, some research has shown that community opposition to development proposals can serve to steward more sustainable and appropriate development outcomes (McClymont & O'Hare 2008). Avoiding a general categorisation of objectors as NIMBYs, it is possible for project proponents and relevant government entities to facilitate an important discussion about project alternatives, which might prompt a better designed, better located, more acceptable outcome (Gibson 2005).

Feldman and Turner (2010) go so far as to argue that it can be helpful for community opponents to express their preferences throughout the decision-making process, as it can improve policy-making. Also, where opposition is categorised as 'NIMBYism' it undermines the potential for a broader discussion about the social, environmental and economic impacts and the possibility of a more optimal outcome being produced (Abram 2000). Relatedly, Sturzaker (2010), in examining how power is exercised by rural-elites in opposing affordable housing projects, argues that by excluding some groups from the process, more powerful groups are able to exercise their power more readily.

For a local planning assessment process to be trusted by members of the community, it must be transparent and comprehensible, providing people with a genuine and timely opportunity to influence decision-making. That decision-making process, in turn, must be open to scrutiny and democratically accountable. In our view, the aim should be an inclusive decision-making process, whereby stakeholders have opportunities to shape the process of change and gain a sense of ownership over any changes that occur in their neighbourhood (Innes & Booher 2010). In addition to this sense of ownership, the legitimacy of the decision increases when it is made in a transparent way and incorporates negotiation techniques, as it enables relevant parties to better understand why that decision was made (Dryzek 2010). Furthermore, an inclusive planning process may dispel some of the fears of objectors by serving as a channel of better education about a proposal (Tighe 2010).

2.5.2 Project-specific strategies

The second set of strategies identified by Iglesias (2002) as being necessary to address community opposition to affordable housing development are project-specific strategies aimed at obtaining planning approval in the face of opposition to a specific affordable housing proposal—these are intended to complement the broader communitywide strategies discussed above.

The site selection process for affordable housing development is often not well understood by local communities, and can contribute to opposition where people believe that the proposed location of a project is inappropriate or inequitable. It has been argued that avoiding jurisdictions where fierce opposition is likely can minimise the delays that it would cause (Pendall 1999). It has also been argued, however, that the housing sector needs to work more methodically in choosing affordable housing sites, to identify those locations likely to yield minimal negative statistical effects on crime rates and indeed property prices (Galster et al. 2002). In other words, to select sites where there will be fewer impacts, not where there will be fewer opponents. Similarly, selecting suitable designs or sites where a given building typology is more accepted—or at least being flexible in responding to design concerns—will minimise delays caused by opposition (Nguyen et al. 2012).

Galster et al. (2003) recommend strategies for minimising the negative externalities of dispersed affordable housing development and maximising the positive. Based on their findings that scattered affordable housing development, especially in low-poverty neighbourhoods, has no impact on surrounding property values, but that higher concentrations of affordable housing projects within a locality can produce some negative externalities, they suggest that:

→ Governments could provide incentives for affordable housing developers to develop projects in low-poverty neighbourhoods rather than vulnerable neighbourhoods (in the form of economic bonuses, rehabilitation grants, or expedited planning assessment processes).

→ It could be made easier for affordable housing residents to move into low-poverty neighbourhoods (through portable rental assistance vouchers, assistance with moving costs and counselling and relocation assistance).

→ The law could be used more effectively to ensure that local planning controls do not exclude affordable housing development.

→ Governments could set limits on the number of affordable housing projects permitted in any given locality. Such 'fair share' principles have been operating in parts of the US for decades (Dear 1992; Hogan 1996).

→ The rehabilitation of rundown properties should be favoured in decisions about the siting of affordable housing projects.

→ Ensure that affordable housing projects are well maintained and well managed, and consider the screening and monitoring of residents.

→ A common criticism from objectors to affordable housing is that the prospective residents of a project will not care for the property because they have no stake in it. Affordable housing providers might therefore provide pathways from affordable rental housing to affordable homeownership.

Iglesias (2002) identifies a range of strategies that affordable housing developers can adopt in managing community opposition to development proposals, where it does arise. For him, the first step for a developer should be to undertake a comprehensive research and planning exercise, where opposition is likely. This involves gathering detailed information on current local planning policies and controls, decision-making processes and timing, the backgrounds and persuasions of the people that will ultimately make the decision (e.g. local councillors), and information about five critical audiences or forums: local government (staff, decision-makers); supporters; concerned neighbours; the media; and the courts.

He suggests that a planning meeting should then be arranged by the developer, bringing together key stakeholders comprising developer staff, project collaborators and trusted allies, especially those that know the neighbourhood, local politics and the media. This planning group can then assemble information on the potential impact of a development on neighbours and set out strategies for approaching each of the five audiences or forums identified above, as summarised below.

→ Approach to local government: ensure that the proposal addresses local housing needs and contributes towards planning and housing policy directions. Identify who, of the key decision-makers, is likely to vote for and against the proposal, and whose vote may still be undecided.

→ Recruiting and using supporters: based on the political situation that the developer faces, think about what type of supporters are needed and what they should do. Supporters may provide intelligence, lobby decision-makers, recruit supporters, perform outreach to objectors, be public spokespeople, or testify at legal hearings.

→ Dealing with concerned neighbours: affordable housing developers must decide early on whether the standard public notification required by the planning assessment process is adequate, or whether they will engage in additional outreach in the form of public meetings, door knocking, individual meetings with local leaders, or open house sessions. Developers should attempt to anticipate neighbour concerns and plan ways of responding to them, carefully choosing which concessions will and will not be made (e.g. changes to built form, parking provision). For Hogan (1996), a strategy of stealth for affordable housing developers is not good enough: community members (either affected neighbours or other key representatives of the community as a whole) must be involved in site selection, planning and the design of buildings from the outset.

→ Employing legal strategies: developers of affordable housing must decide whether they are willing to use legal strategies to make their case in the face of opposition from community members, and if so, then what type of strategies.

→ Media and public relations: developers of affordable housing must decide whether they wish to be pro-active in seeking media coverage or simply respond to media coverage generated by others. Either way, developers should seek to actively shape the story, rather than letting journalists fall back on standard stories.

In the event that the developer and objectors cannot reach an agreement and the conflict between them becomes polarised and/or drawn-out, Dear (1992) suggests that mediation by a neutral third-party can help identify a mutually agreeable solution.

2.5.3 Post-entry communication strategies

It may be desirable for developers of affordable housing to continue communicating with community members once a project is complete, especially in order to maintain good relations with community members where a proposal was initially controversial, or where community support is vital to the process of client integration and socialisation (Dear 1992). This can occur through residents of the project participating in neighbourhood clean-up days or flower planting as a gesture of neighbourly good will, or through block parties or open houses. A decision may also be made that the community advisory board for the project, if there was one, is maintained. Another strategy used by some affordable housing providers is to conduct post-entry evaluations among residents living close to projects that have been completed, in order to assess the extent to which the development has impacted them.

2.6 Summary

This chapter has reviewed the international literature on the phenomenon of community opposition to unwanted development proposals, especially unwanted affordable housing proposals. The existing literature on the topic is vast and multi-disciplinary, but it is also based mainly on research undertaken in the United States, with little equivalent research to date on Australian cities. This is a gap that the present study will begin to address. The structure of the literature review reflects the study's five main research questions, dealing in turn with existing research on the policy context for community opposition to affordable housing in Australia, the nature of community opposition to affordable housing, the experienced impacts of affordable housing development on host areas and the range of strategies for addressing or mitigating community opposition to affordable housing development. We will return to various items from this literature review in the discussion of our own empirical findings in Chapters 8 and 9, comparing the evidence from our empirical research with comparable findings from overseas. In the next chapter, the approach to the study's empirical research is described and justified, with particular reference to its five research questions.

3 RESEARCH METHOD

This chapter outlines the study's approach to the empirical research. In order to address the five research questions, a mixed-methods case study approach was devised. This combined semi-structured interviews, a focus group, interview-surveys, hedonic modelling and content analysis, as detailed below.

3.1 Research aims and questions

The central aim of this project was to better understand the nature of community opposition to affordable housing development and consider the opportunities for it to be addressed through policy measures and practical steps. The research questions for the study were as follows:

1. What is the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing?

2. What are the stated and unstated factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects?

3. How and why does community opposition to affordable housing development escalate?

4. What are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?

5. How can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated or addressed through policy measures and practical steps?

3.2 Research design

The process for selecting case studies and the components of the research design are discussed below.

3.2.1 Case study identification

An important exercise for the team in the early stages of the research was to identify suitable case studies for the empirical work. Because the findings of the research would inevitably be place-specific to some extent, it was critical that the case studies selected for the study would generate the richest possible data.

The intention was to select case studies exhibiting varying levels of opposition to affordable housing development in recent years, one each from the states of New South Wales, Victoria and Queensland. Each case study would be a council area where multiple affordable housing projects had been developed since 2007, where some of these projects had been fiercely opposed by local communities, and where others had not been opposed. The year 2007 was used as a cut-off point because it was crucial that instances of opposition to affordable housing development remained fresh in the minds of stakeholders. Otherwise, there was a risk that the data generated could be unreliable, and it would almost certainly be more difficult to attract people to participate in the research. For the same reasons, it was desirable that in each area there were 'extreme' cases (Flyvbjerg 2006), where opposition to affordable housing projects had been high in profile. 2009 was the first year in which new housing funded under the Australian Government's SHI came on line, accompanied by expedited planning assessment processes (see Chapter 1).

The selection of case studies fitting these criteria would allow the team to examine the concerns that people had about specific projects, the strategies that opponents had used, the responses of government agencies and housing developers to the opposition, the opportunities for local concerns about affordable housing development

to have potentially been addressed, and the reasons that certain projects encountered more opposition than others.

The first step in case study selection was to identify the full range of possible case studies from NSW, Queensland and Victoria. Two approaches were used for this: a systematic review of media coverage on community opposition to affordable housing development, and correspondence with policy-makers, researchers and practitioners in each state. The review of media coverage involved members of the research team identifying articles on opposition to affordable housing from national, state and local newspapers in NSW, Queensland and Victoria for all years between 2007 and 2012. Following Nguyen et al. (2012) and using a Google internet search and Factiva database search accessed through the University of NSW library, a search was made for all articles including the terms 'affordable housing', 'low-income housing', 'community housing', 'housing association', 'low-cost housing', 'public housing', 'social housing', combined with other terms such as 'community opposition', 'NIMBY', 'BANANA', 'resistance', 'community conflict' and 'ghetto'. The second approach involved members of the research team directly contacting key stakeholders in state government, local government, the NFP housing sector and academia to discuss possible case studies for the research. The two approaches generated similar results with the same areas coming up time and again as suitable case studies.

Once the team was satisfied that the full range of possible case studies had been identified, a shortlist was drawn up of eight council areas where there had been varying levels of opposition to affordable housing development in the last three years; four in NSW, two in Queensland and two in Victoria. A meeting of the research team's 'Reference Group' was then arranged to discuss which three of these should be selected for study. The Reference Group comprised senior representatives from state government planning and housing departments, local government, the NFP housing sector and an affordable housing advocacy group. The purpose of the reference group was to help steer the research and ensure its policy relevance. Views were sought from Reference Group members on the three case studies that should be selected for the research. Following the meeting, it was agreed by the research team that the three case studies would be the cities of Parramatta (NSW), Port Phillip (VIC) and Brisbane (QLD). In addition, an instance of fierce opposition to affordable housing development in the Queensland city of Cairns would be included. In all four of these case studies, there had been multiple affordable housing projects developed in recent years, and in all of them some projects had encountered high profile opposition.

3.2.2   Data collection

Five methods were used to gather data for the empirical section of the research; semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, a focus group, interview-surveys, hedonic modelling and content analysis. Each of these methods helped address the study's research questions (Table 1) and each is discussed in detail below.

Table 1: Research questions addressed through each method

	Lit. review	Interviews Focus gp.	Interview-surveys	Hedonic model	Content analysis
1. What is the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing?	✓	✓			✓
2. What are the stated and unstated factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects?	✓	✓	✓		✓
3. How and why does community opposition to affordable housing development escalate?	✓	✓			✓
4. What are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
5. How can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated or addressed through policy measures and practical steps?	✓	✓	✓		✓

3.2.3 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders generated data that addressed all five of the research questions, with the emphasis varying by interviewee. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of state government housing and planning departments (officers and politicians), local government (planners, policy-makers and politicians), affordable housing developers (government housing departments, NFP providers and private developers) and housing advocacy groups, as well as community activists directly involved in opposing affordable housing development. A total of 50 people were interviewed, with the broad position of each interviewee shown in Table 2. The split in each state depended on which group was responsible for the provision of affordable housing and which projects had been opposed. Interviewees listed under 'private sector' were consultants or private developers involved in the design, building or management of affordable housing.

Table 2: Number of interviewees by background

	State Gov. housing	State Gov. planning	Local Gov.	Politics	NFP housing sector	Private sector	Advoc. groups	Comm activist	Total
Parramatta	6	2	3	3	2	1	3	-	20
Port Phillip	4	2	1	2	5	1	-		15
Queensland	2	-	3	1	5			4	15
Total	12	4	7	6	12	2	3	4	50

Interviewees were generally identified through an analysis of policy documents, newspaper articles and planning assessment documents, or through research team members contacting stakeholders with knowledge of the topic area to ask for suggestions. Interviewees were contacted directly by email or telephone. Interviews were recorded wherever possible, the majority took place face-to-face, but a small

number were conducted over the telephone. Interviews were transcribed and quotes illustrating key points or themes were noted.

Interviews with policy-makers from state and local government, politicians and housing advocacy groups tended to focus on the range of concerns raised by opponents of affordable housing, the factors contributing to the escalation of the opposition in certain cases, the politics of the opposition and future policy directions. In interviews with developers of affordable housing and development control planners, however, discussion centred on the specifics of individual projects, policies and opponents, the lifecycle of the opposition and the strategies used by opponents. Each person interviewed was identified by the research team as a key contact with direct involvement in the delivery of affordable housing, either as policy-maker, developer, regulator, researcher, advocate or opponent. Although relatively few community activists were interviewed for the research, several of the politicians we spoke to were objectors to affordable housing development and we also spoke to a large number of community activists in Parramatta through the resident interview-surveys (see Section 3.2.5).The data from interviews are reported in the case study chapters (Chapters 4–6) and the discussion in Chapters 8 and 9.

3.2.4 Focus group

In addition to semi-structured interviews, a focus group was held in Western Sydney at which the issue of community opposition to affordable housing development was discussed over a period of two and a half hours. This focus group took place in April 2013, just prior to the completion of the research. The focus group was seen by the research team as a way of testing the study's preliminary findings against the lived experiences of residents and practitioners. Nine people participated: six were current affordable housing residents and three were representatives of NFP housing organisations. The six residents were all women (not intentionally) and had in most cases been living in affordable housing for many years. Two of the representatives from the NFP housing organisation also had experience working at the SHA, the third was new to the NFP sector but had private development experience. The discussion was wide-ranging, although mostly focusing on why people objected to affordable housing, the objectors themselves and the validity (or not) of their concerns. The focus group discussion supported and reinforced the interview findings and informed the discussion in Chapters 8 and 9.

3.2.5 Resident interview-surveys

In order to capture resident concerns about affordable housing development and to assess the experienced effects of affordable housing development on host areas, short interview-surveys were conducted in areas surrounding affordable housing projects that had been controversial when they were originally proposed in 2009, 2010 or 2011, and which had since been developed and occupied. These interview-surveys, then, represented a form of post-entry assessment of the impacts (or not) of controversial affordable housing projects on their host area. It had originally been envisaged that interviews would be conducted with community objectors to explore their concerns about affordable housing and the strategies that they had used to oppose projects. However, it proved challenging to identify community activists to participate in the research, mainly because of the ephemeral nature of the opposition in most cases, with opposition most often organised and expressed through activist groups that were established in response to particular development proposals, and which were then disbanded once planning authorities had made a decision. It was decided that interview-surveys in areas surrounding controversial projects would help overcome the difficulties involved in contacting activists and would also give the team

a better sense of the experienced effects of the affordable housing project on a broad cross-section of residents, rather than just vocal opponents. Interview-surveys were selected for the research rather than online or postal surveys because:

→ The number of households affected by and/or aware of each affordable housing development was usually so small that a high response rate was needed from these households if the results were to be meaningful. Self-administered surveys addressed to the occupant usually achieve a low response rate (Babbie 2007) and were not then appropriate for this research.

→ Some of the processes and issues discussed with survey respondents were complex and could not easily be captured with a self-administered survey.

→ Visiting the areas where affordable housing developments had been controversial gave the research team a better understanding of the issues of concern in the community and meant that the research team could note any relevant characteristics of the neighbourhood.

Interview-surveys were administered to residents living in nine areas of Parramatta, Sydney, surrounding affordable housing projects that had been controversial when originally proposed in 2009, 2010 or 2011. Eight of these had since been developed and occupied. Parramatta was chosen for the research for several reasons:

→ Parramatta was the 'extreme' case study selected in NSW so it made sense to also conduct post-entry interview-surveys in that area.

→ Parramatta was accessible to the research team, all of whom live in Sydney.

→ Parramatta City Council has an online planning portal through which data can be accessed on all development applications made in recent years, including any objections that were raised in formal submissions.

→ There had been high levels of affordable housing development in Parramatta between 2009 and 2011 by government agencies, NFP organisations and private developers. Much of this development had been highly controversial, meaning that there were many potential projects for inclusion in the research.

Because it was necessary for projects selected for the post-entry assessment to be complete and occupied at the time of the fieldwork, the number of potential projects for inclusion in the work was limited to an extent: although most of the affordable housing projects developed under the SHI in Parramatta were complete by the time of the fieldwork, the length of the planning and construction process for privately-initiated projects (especially where there had been opposition) meant that few were complete at that time. Nevertheless, two suitable privately-initiated projects were identified for inclusion in the research, along with six initiated by the SHA. In addition, a privately-initiated project that had been controversial and had subsequently been refused planning permission was included, so as to examine the concerns of objectors in this case and the (ultimately effective) oppositional strategies that they had used. The projects ranged in size from four dwellings to 26 dwellings, a total of 154 interview-surveys were completed (Table 3). In Chapter 7, there is more detailed discussion of the projects selected for the post-entry interview-surveys.

Table 3: Projects selected for post-entry interview-surveys

Street	Number of dwellings	Developer	Total surveys completed
Markey Street	12	SHA	20
Isabella Street	12	Private	14
Bond Avenue	4	SHA	15
Kirk Avenue	8	SHA	16
Victoria Road	10 room boarding house	Private	16
Excelsior Street	22	SHA	19
Chamberlain Road	19	SHA	18
Aubrey Street	26	SHA	16
Gore Street	Conversion to create 7 room boarding house	Private	20
Total	-	-	154

The survey was on a single A4 page and was split into four sections (Appendix 2). The first section asked for details of household and home occupation type, as well as perceptions of area change. The second and third sections asked about the householder's attitude towards the controversial affordable housing project, any concerns that they had when it was proposed, and their involvement in opposing it. The final section asked whether the affordable housing project has had any effect (positive or negative) on the area since completion. The survey contained twenty-five questions, although many could only be answered if the householder had actively opposed the controversial affordable housing project when it was originally proposed.

Interview-surveys were conducted between July 2012 and March 2013, with a hiatus between December and February as the research team sought to avoid excessive exposure to the harsh Australian summer sun at a time when many people are also away on holiday. A pilot was run on a Friday afternoon, but all other interview-surveys were conducted on Saturdays in order to maximise the chance that people would be home. Interview-surveys usually took between two and five minutes to complete, although some were shorter and a few were much longer.

In the week prior to the research team's scheduled visit to the areas surrounding the nine projects (Table 3), a notice was left in letter-boxes, informing householders that members of the research team would be visiting homes on a specified date, later that week. These notices were left in the letterboxes of about 60 homes around each controversial affordable housing project, with the homes selected being those that were most likely to have been impacted by the development (those closest to the site, on the same street, or where the project could be seen from their home). The 60 homes notified of the research were usually within 150–200 metres of the controversial affordable housing project, the same homes were then visited by the research team on the survey date and householders were invited to participate in the research. All residents receiving notices were given the chance to opt out by emailing or calling members of the research team, but only one person did this. A couple of others emailed to say that they would not be home on the day in question, but would still like to participate in the research.

Where people were home and opened their door, participation rates were high (we estimate that about two-thirds agreed to participate). A total of 154 interview-surveys

were completed across the nine case study projects (Table 3). Between 14 and 20 interview-surveys were completed for each, meaning that householders in between one-fifth and one-third of the 60 homes most likely to have been impacted by the controversial affordable housing projects were surveyed. There was huge variation in the length of occupation. Twenty-three participants had lived in their homes for 40 years or more (one since 1945), but for many it was a year or less. With people who had lived in the area for a short period of time, usually less than 12 months, the research team thanked them but did not seek participation. The findings from the interview-surveys are reported in Chapter 7 and then discussed again in Chapter 8 with reference to the research questions.

3.2.6 Hedonic regression analysis of property sales

A common concern raised by opponents of proposed affordable housing projects (see Section 2.3) is that property values will be diminished as a result of development. A key aim of this study, addressing research question 4, was to test whether this fear is realised: what influence does the development of affordable housing have on property sales values in surrounding areas? After seeking the advice of George Galster in a team meeting in August 2012, the research team set out to identify areas where:

→ Affordable housing projects had been developed consistently in the years between 2000 and 2009, so as to be able to monitor trends in property sales values for several years following completion of projects.

→ A range of affordable housing projects had been developed in various mixed-tenure neighbourhoods, ranging in type and scale.

Only two council areas in Australia met these criteria: Brisbane and Port Phillip (Melbourne). A greater number of affordable housing projects had been developed in Brisbane than in Port Phillip between 2000 and 2009 across a greater range of neighbourhoods. It was therefore decided that Brisbane would be used for the property sales hedonic modelling exercise. Data on property sales in Brisbane was supplied by Australian Property Monitors, free of charge. A total of 295 162 valid sales records since 1 October 1999 were supplied. After the dataset was cleaned, a total of 98 968 sales records were geocoded. Only sales which occurred *after* the public announcement of its nearest affordable housing development were included; this further reduced the overall sample included for hedonic modelling to 5276 records.

A quantitative approach was adopted, using a hedonic regression analysis as well as descriptive statistics to measure the impact of affordable housing development on property values. Hedonic pricing models were estimated for different measures of distance (metres) from each affordable housing development in Brisbane. The independent variables used in the hedonic pricing model included both property-specific and affordable housing-specific variables (see Table 4). The hedonic models examined the impacts of affordable housing development on property values, taking into account proximity to affordable housing, size of property, housing attributes and date of sale. These variables were chosen as the most reliable for use in a hedonic model after a multicollinearity test excluded all other variables. The models account for these variables using a range of numerical indicators (see Table 4).

Table 4: Selected housing attributes and proximity to affordable housing

Independent variables	Metrics
House location	Latitude
	Longitude
House sale date	Sales date (after affordable housing development announced)
Number of bedrooms	Continuous
Number of bathrooms	Continuous
Number of garages	Continuous
Land size	Per sq. metre
Proximity to Affordable Housing	Metre
Dependent variable	**Metrics**
House sale prices	Dollars (AUD)

When using the proximity of affordable housing projects in a hedonic pricing model such as this, autocorrelation of errors is a potential issue. Specifically, autocorrelation violates the ordinary least squares assumption that the error terms are uncorrelated. The traditional test for the presence of first-order autocorrelation is the Durbin-Watson statistics or, if the explanatory variables include a lagged dependent variable, Durbin's h statistics (Ward & Gleditsch 2008). As no time-lagged dependent variables were included in the hedonic models used in this analysis, the Durbin-Watson statistic is used to ascertain the impact of autocorrelation. First-order autocorrelation of the error terms may be present if the Durbin-Watson statistics is less than one. This was found not to be the case in our analysis. Further, in order to minimise the impact of spatial autocorrelation bias, several smaller subset study areas of affordable housing projects across Brisbane were used to test the hedonic pricing analysis prior to wider application. Through this model, while spatial autocorrelation is not controlled, temporal differences (i.e. local market conditions) are then taken into account.

In all, two different hedonic models were used. The first tested the impacts of affordable housing developments on property sales values at different levels of proximity to the affordable housing developments. One hundred metre intervals were used as the base unit, with modelling performed at 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 metres to the closest affordable housing development. This test was aimed at highlighting the spatial impact of affordable housing developments on property sales values. A total of seventeen projects were included in this first hedonic model. The second model examined the impact of these same affordable housing developments at the level of individual projects. Separate hedonic models were run for 14 of the seventeen affordable housing projects used for first model. The other three projects were excluded from the second model because too few property sales had been recorded close to them. Due to the still small number of sales that occurred within close proximity to each of the included fourteen affordable housing developments since their announcement, this second hedonic model was only performed for all sales within 500 metres rather than at 100 metres intervals. The results generated by these two hedonic modelling exercises and the methods used are discussed in detail in Section 7.2.

3.2.7 Content analysis

For each of the case studies in the research, a range of policy documents, government reports, newspaper articles, blogs, planning submissions and petitions, and websites discussing community opposition to affordable housing development were studied for both their manifest (visible) and latent (underlying) meanings (Babbie 2007). The latter approach was particularly important for this study, given that people are often aware that they cannot oppose affordable housing proposals simply on the basis that they do not wish to live near lower income tenants, instead couching their opposition in terms of planning concerns to do with density and parking. It was beyond the scope of the research to compare the way that the opposition to affordable housing was variously represented through human communications or to code that data, and the content analysis was therefore used more to supplement data from interviews and interview-surveys on the factors that underlay community opposition to affordable housing and the policy and housing market context for that opposition.

The largest single component of the content analysis was the analysis of written submissions made by members of the public to planning authorities in opposition to affordable housing proposals. A total of 727 written submissions were analysed: 401 from Parramatta, 267 from Port Phillip and 59 from Brisbane. In Parramatta and Brisbane, these submissions were accessed through online planning portals that provided access to scanned copies of all documentation associated with development applications. In Port Phillip, this facility was not available and members of the research visited the council offices and accessed paper files. The concerns raised in submissions were recorded and categorised by just two members of the research team in order to reduce the influence of subjectivity. Quotes that typified a particular theme or viewpoint were also documented. Where available, the street addresses of objectors were recorded and mapped using ArcView GIS, allowing the research team to assess the extent to which the opposition was localised or dispersed.

3.3 Summary

This chapter outlined the research aims and questions for the study, as well as the research design. A mixed methods approach was devised for the empirical work that directly addressed the research questions. This mixed-methods approach was applied to four case studies: Parramatta, Port Phillip, Brisbane and Cairns. A total of 50 stakeholder interviews were conducted, along with one focus group and 154 post-occupancy interview-surveys in areas of Parramatta (Sydney) where affordable housing proposals had recently been opposed by local community members. Hedonic modelling was also used to test the extent to which proximity to affordable housing had influenced property sales values in Brisbane. Finally, a range of policy documents, government reports, media reports, planning submissions, websites and blogs were analysed for both their manifest and latent meaning.

In the next three chapters, the research findings from the Parramatta (Chapter 4), Port Phillip (Chapter 5) and Queensland (Chapter 6) case studies are reported. Each chapter begins with an outline of the physical, social, historical and policy context in the case study, followed by discussion of the opposition encountered to affordable housing projects in recent years, its outcomes and perspectives on its causes and how it might have been avoided. The decision was made to write the findings up as standalone case studies because of the place-specific nature of the issues at hand, and because of the widely varying policy and governance contexts across the states. In Chapter 7, the impact of recently-developed affordable housing projects on host areas in Parramatta and Brisbane is examined. In Chapter 8, the study's first four research questions are addressed, with reference to the empirical findings and

literature review. Chapter 9 then deals specifically with the implications of the study's findings for affordable housing developers and governments as they seek to mitigate or address community opposition to affordable housing projects.

4 'UNSUPPORTED DEVELOPMENT' IN PARRAMATTA, NSW

4.1 Background

This chapter reports empirical findings from the fieldwork undertaken in Parramatta, NSW. From 2009, there was fierce opposition from local politicians and sections of the community to a range of both privately and government financed affordable housing projects. This culminated in the erection by Parramatta City Council of three metre steel signs outside nearly thirty State Housing Authority (SHA) development sites in 2010, with these signs proclaiming that the affordable housing projects proposed for these sites was 'Unsupported development: brought to you by the State Government'. The decision to erect these signs followed the escalation of resident opposition to affordable housing development throughout late 2009 and 2010, with much of this playing out in the media. Several interviewees also suggested that politics and acrimonious relationships between key individuals had contributed to the high profile of the opposition in Parramatta. The controversy in Parramatta and a handful of other cases elsewhere in NSW was ultimately a major factor prompting a shift in the NSW Government's planning policy framework for affordable housing in 2011.

The chapter begins by briefly outlining the historical, demographic and physical characteristics of Parramatta, as well as the policy and governance context in which the opposition to affordable housing development arose. The nature of that opposition and stakeholder perspectives on how it escalated and how it might have been avoided are then considered. The chapter is based on semi-structured interviews with 20 representatives of NSW government housing and planning departments, housing advocacy groups, planners and politicians at Parramatta City Council, and private and not-for-profit housing developers. The research team also analysed government and media reports, as well as 401 written submissions made by community members against affordable housing projects proposed in Parramatta between 2009 and 2011.

4.2 Parramatta

Parramatta is one of Australia's oldest settlements and is today the principal commercial, educational, government and cultural hub for Greater Western Sydney. Located 23 kilometres west of central Sydney, it is viewed by the NSW Government to be Metropolitan Sydney's second CBD (NSW Government 2010). The Parramatta City Council area (Figure 1) comprises an area of 61 square kilometres and had a population of 166 858 in 2011 (ABS 2011). Parramatta's residents are socio-culturally diverse and highly educated, although typically earning less than the median income for both NSW and Australia, and with a slightly higher proportion of residents unemployed (Table 5). This picture is complicated, however, by the wide geographical disparities within Parramatta in terms of income levels; broadly speaking, areas in the northern parts of the council area are considerably wealthier than the south. Across Parramatta council area, a far higher proportion of residents lived in apartments and rented their homes in 2011 than was the case for NSW and Australia as a whole (ABS 2011).

Figure 1: Location of Parramatta local government area (LGA) in the Sydney Greater Metropolitan Area

Table 5: Resident profile key statistics (Source: ABS, 2011)

	Parramatta	NSW	Australia
Median age	33	38	37
Residents born in Australia	49%	69%	70%
Both parents born in Australia	26%	52%	54%
Unemployed	7%	6%	6%
Median weekly income	$544	$561	$577
University or tertiary education	18%	14%	14%
Residence: freestanding house	53%	70%	76%
Residence: attached house	13%	11%	10%
Residence: apartment	34%	19%	14%
Property owned (outright or mortgage)	57%	67%	67%
Rented	39%	30%	30%

Parramatta CBD makes up a small component of the council area in terms of geographical area and resident population, but it is overwhelmingly the focus for business, government and entertainment. Buildings in the CBD comprise a varied mix of low, medium and high rise commercial, government and cultural buildings (Figure 2). Although the CBD area retains a large stock of historic buildings, it has also undergone widespread redevelopment in the post-war period, with this continuing into the present. Away from the CBD, development densities and building heights rapidly fall away, with areas of the Parramatta council area outside the CBD predominantly low to medium rise and dominated by residential uses, albeit with local commercial centres scattered throughout. The dominant building type in residential areas has

traditionally been freestanding single storey dwellings (Figure 3), although these have increasingly been replaced by villa complexes and two storey homes in recent years. In certain parts of Parramatta, there are large numbers of three and four storey walk-up apartment blocks.

Figure 2: Parramatta Town Hall and low-rise retail premises against a backdrop of high rise commercial, government and residential buildings

Figure 3: A typical residential street southwest of the Parramatta CBD. Most homes are freestanding single storey dwellings with off-street parking and front and back yards, streets are wide and there is little through traffic

4.3   Policy context

In 2009, the NSW Government introduced the State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing), referred to herein as the A-SEPP. The principal aims of the A-SEPP were to incentivise privately-financed affordable housing development and to streamline planning assessment processes for SHA projects. Among its many provisions (see Davison et al. 2012 for details), the A-SEPP overrode local planning controls to make certain forms of privately-financed low and medium rise infill development permissible in all residential zones, irrespective of local controls, so long as a proportion of the dwellings provided were managed by a NFP housing provider and rented as 'affordable rental housing' at sub-market rates (NSW Government 2009). Where such forms of development were already permissible in an area, the A-SEPP offered density bonuses to private developers for projects that incorporated affordable rental housing. Boarding houses were also made permissible in areas zoned for residential, commercial and mixed-use, so long as they complied with certain built form standards.[3] All privately-financed infill and boarding house projects proposed under the A-SEPP were still to be assessed by local government planning authorities, as any other development application of equivalent scale usually would. However, the A-SEPP also made one and two storey SHA projects, comprising 20 dwellings or less, permissible without consent. In effect, the latter provisions meant

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[3] Boarding houses are residential buildings that provide multiple rooms wholly or partly let in lodgings. Facilities such as kitchens and bathrooms may be contained with rooms or they may be shared.

that the SHA could self-approve development proposals without the need for consent from a local council.

The A-SEPP was introduced in the same year as the SHI, meaning that large numbers of dwellings funded through the SHI (Chapter 1) could be self-approved by the SHA. The SHA's self-approval process for SHI properties comprised three main parts. First, a preliminary Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) report would be prepared by a team within the SHA, under Part 5 of the NSW Environment and Assessment Act (1979). This EIA would address the full range of local and state planning controls. The relevant council and occupants in neighbouring properties would then be notified of the development proposal and given 21 days to make a formal submission to the SHA. Although the A-SEPP required just these adjoining neighbours to be notified, interviewees from the SHA told us that occupants in a further two properties on either side were generally notified. Any submissions made by those notified would then be considered by the same team responsible for the preliminary EIA, with the EIA then finalised, in light of any comments that had been made. Finally, the proposal and finalised EIA were referred to a second team of independent planning consultants that the SHA had hired specifically to provide an additional planning assessment. Only once the proposal had been recommended for approval by both assessment teams could construction proceed.

Interviewees from the SHA claimed that this two-stage approval process was more rigorous than the standard planning approval process through local governments. As a senior member of staff directly involved in the process put it:

> … we found that the self-assessment process was more rigorous than Council … it was by no means a rubber stamp …

It was also viewed by them as beneficial to the SHA because it sped up planning approval times, while also removing the risk that proposals would encounter obstacles in the form of local politicians.

There were strict cost constraints imposed on state governments for the delivery of projects funded under the SHI; each unit was required to be delivered for no more than $300 000, including the cost of acquiring land (Shepherd & Abelson 2010). In order to reduce total construction costs, many of the sites selected for development in NSW were existing SHA land holdings. Nearly three-quarters of projects developed under the SHI were on land owned by the SHA (ibid.), meaning that few sites had to be acquired specifically. As a result of this approach, the new properties developed under the SHI were often clustered in parts of NSW where the SHA already owned large areas of land, one of which was the southern portion of the Parramatta council area. Alongside the cost constraints imposed by the Australian Government, state governments were required to deliver housing under the SHI to tight deadlines, with a target set of 75 per cent of dwellings to be completed by the end of 2010—less than two years after the initiative commenced (Shepherd & Abelson 2010).

More than 6000 dwellings were delivered in NSW under the SHI, with 58 per cent of all projects (totalling 3180 dwellings) self-approved by the SHA (Shepherd & Abelson 2010). The remaining 42 per cent of projects were mostly those that could not be self-approved by the SHA under the A-SEPP (for instance, because they comprised more than 20 dwellings), with these approved either through standard local government approval processes or under the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan (State Infrastructure Delivery) Act 2009 (Shepherd & Abelson 2010). With respect to privately-initiated affordable housing development, Davison et al. (2012) show that private developers did not initially take advantage of the A-SEPP provisions to the same extent as the SHA, but several interviewees in this study suggested that private-

sector interest in the A-SEPP had grown steadily between 2009 and 2011, particularly among smaller-scale developers.

Large swathes of NSW were unaffected by the A-SEPP provisions introduced in 2009, with the SHA having no land holdings in many areas and the A-SEPP provisions only really making the development of affordable housing financially appealing to private developers in certain parts of Sydney (Davison et al. 2012). Even where multi-unit SHA or privately-financed affordable housing projects were being proposed under the A-SEPP in areas where they would not have been permissible under local planning controls, there was usually little or no opposition from local community members. SHA staff estimated, for instance, that just 2 or 3 per cent of their self-approved projects had encountered significant opposition, while an independent review put the figure at around 5 per cent (Shepherd & Abelson 2010, p.104). All of this notwithstanding, there were a handful of cases in NSW where local communities reacted fiercely to affordable housing projects proposed under the A-SEPP (Shelter NSW 2012), with the opposition in these places often gaining political traction and receiving considerable coverage in the media. One such case was Parramatta.

4.4 Opposition to affordable housing development in Parramatta

4.4.1 Unsupported development

In September 2010, the Mayor of Parramatta took the decision to erect three metre steel signs outside nearly 30 sites where the SHA was planning to build new affordable housing. Many of these projects contravened Parramatta City Council's local planning controls, but were permissible under the provisions of the A-SEPP or the NSW Nation Building and Jobs Plan Act (2009) (NBJPA). The signs erected by the Lord Mayor proclaimed that the projects being proposed for the sites were 'Unsupported development: brought to you by the State Government'. This move followed the escalation of local opposition to the development of both SHA and privately-financed affordable housing projects in Parramatta under the A-SEPP and NBJPA throughout 2009 and 2010, and it represented an attempt by the Lord Mayor to distance the City Council from the affordable housing development that was taking place. The signs were launched by the Mayor under a 'Save Our Suburbs' slogan.

Politicians in Parramatta recalled in interviews that they had erected the signs because they, and the City Council, were 'bearing the brunt' of a community backlash against affordable housing at the time. As one politician explained, local community members objecting to affordable housing proposals in their areas were directing their frustrations at local politicians because ' … with planning decisions, everybody just assumes that it is the local council's responsibility'. Recounting their decision to erect the signs, politicians explained in interviews that the signs were seen by them as a way of re-directing the anger being expressed by community members away from the City Council and towards the NSW Government. As one local politician stated:

> We were forced—we had no choice [but to erect the signs]. Because it was a State Government problem—they created this problem … so our backs were against the wall, so we thought … we're just going to fight back. And that's what we did [with the signs].

Figure 4: Parramatta City Council's 'Unsupported Development' sign, erected in front of an SHA development site

Photograph by Peter Malone

The signs were part of a broader offensive against the NSW Government in which Parramatta politicians attempted to show local community members that, like them, the City Council did not support the various affordable housing projects that were coming through under the A-SEPP and NBJPA, neither did it have anything to do with many of them (as proponent or planning authority). As another politician recalled, the erection of the signs represented an attempt by the City Council to get community members on-side, and it was accompanied by a series of more pro-active actions that sought to alert local community members to affordable housing projects proposed in their area. They believed that both strategies had been extremely effective:

> [after the signs were erected] politicians in Council here weren't getting an influx of statements blaming us … [Community members] had some sympathy for what we were doing, they were on our side. I had meetings around the neighbourhoods and at those meetings I wasn't being lambasted with criticism … In many cases too I'd be on the front foot. When I see these [affordable housing projects] being advertised I'd be out there with a letter, telling people—this is going to happen in your neighbourhood … So I didn't sort of hang around and wait for it to happen, for people to get upset. It happened the other way around.

The steel signs were erected about a year after the introduction of the A-SEPP at a time when community opposition to affordable housing development was gaining momentum, fuelled by newspaper accounts of opposition to several SHA projects proposed in the Parramatta council area. Articles with headlines such as 'Ghetto coming to a suburb near you' (The Telegraph, 2 January, 2010) and 'Revolt over housing' (Parramatta Advertiser, 22 July, 2009) were published by local and regional newspapers, with most of these positioning Parramatta City Council and hard-done-by community members in direct opposition to the SHA and the Housing Minister at the time, David Borger. Interviewees recalled that, at this time, local politicians had also used council meetings to speak out against controversial projects and gain the political support of angry community members in the process. This, in turn, further fuelled local media reports about the controversy, increasing community angst:

Once it starts to get to the council, obviously the local press generally attend [Parramatta] council meetings, so the council are stood there grandstanding about [the opposition], they've ended up with articles about it in the local paper. Some [Parramatta] residents obviously read the local paper and so yes, there was certainly a bit of a campaign that started from that. It got out there reasonably quickly that as an entire organisation, [Parramatta City Council] were uncomfortable with some of the in-fill housing and the redevelopment by the [SHA]. As part of it, you've got articles in the local paper that then, I guess, increased residents' interest and angst about the proposals.

The concerns raised explicitly by community members quoted in media reports in Parramatta were mostly about the density and bulk of the new affordable housing projects, inadequate parking provision, a perceived lack of community consultation by the SHA in the approval of the projects, and the types of people that were likely to live in those projects once they were complete; 'They say senior people with disabilities [will live there], but does that mean ex-prisoners, the mentally ill, or what?', as one concerned local resident is quoted as saying (Parramatta Advertiser, 22 July, 2009). We return to discuss the factors that underlay the opposition from local residents and businesspeople in Section 4.4.2.

Politicians from Parramatta City Council were frequent commentators in the media around this time, often attacking the A-SEPP for permitting development that was 'destroying neighbourhoods' (Parramatta Advertiser, 22 July, 2009) and creating 'clusters of marginalized groups' (Parramatta Advertiser, 14 July 2010). The politicians quoted spoke out against the way that the A-SEPP and NBJPA trumped council planning controls to permit two storey multi-unit buildings in areas that were zoned for single family homes, as well as complaining about the lack of appeals rights for disgruntled residents and the physical inappropriateness of the projects being built. As a local politician explained in an interview:

We felt uncomfortable because [the A-SEPP] introduced medium density development—the housing stock we had in the main was single dwellings and they were in traditional neighbourhoods … Under our planning scheme, medium density housing wasn't permissible. So the [SHA] effectively were bringing in developments which a normal developer—your average developer—wouldn't be able to do. And it even got worse. It got worse because they could do this without consent ….

Although neighbours and councils did have an opportunity to make formal submissions to the SHA against proposed affordable housing projects, there was skepticism from this particular politician about the extent to which submissions made against SHA projects had any bearing on planning approval outcomes:

The legislation has consultation in it. But the consultation is: you're going to get it, right. [The SHA] don't consult, I think it's more of an insult.

Partly this skepticism was a product of the fact that the NSW Department of Planning had not consulted extensively with local councils before introducing the A-SEPP in 2009. This lack of consultation was a product of anxiety about the possible effects of a global economic downturn and a desire to introduce the A-SEPP quickly before new housing development came on line under the SHI. Interviewees suggested to us that Department staff had spoken directly to just four or five local councils prior to the introduction of the A-SEPP, from a total of 152 across NSW. This was seen by several interviewees to have contributed to the push-back from some councils once the policy was introduced. As one representative from a local NFP housing provider put it, the

NSW Department of Planning's lack of consultation on the A-SEPP had put many 'noses out of joint':

> I really do think that half of the shortfalls [of the A-SEPP] have been through communication … noses have been significantly put out of joint, as a result of the way the Labor Government implemented the SEPP.

While there was widely-publicised hostility from local governments towards the NSW Government over the introduction and provisions of the A-SEPP in certain parts of the state throughout 2009 and 2010 (The Daily Telegraph, 2 January, 2010), there was also a sense from some interviewees that the ill-feeling between local and state government was intensified in the case of Parramatta by long-standing animosity between the Lord Mayor of Parramatta, Paul Garrard, and the NSW Housing Minister, David Borger.

Borger had previously served as Mayor of Parramatta and he and Garrard were described by interviewees as being 'the opposite of friends'. Throughout 2009 and 2010, Garrard attacked Borger and the SHA in the media and on his blog, with animosity between these two gaining widespread coverage in early 2010 when confidential emails, in which Borger described Garrard as being 'as cunning as a fox', were accidentally forwarded by the email recipient to all councillors (Parramatta Advertiser, 17 March 2010). In the media coverage of that event, Garrard is quoted as having said that there had been animosity between him and Borger since the time when both had run election campaigns for the State Electoral district of Granville (part of which is in Parramatta council area) in 2007. Some interviewees believed that Garrard's opposition to the A-SEPP had not just been about the provisions of the policy itself, but also about the fact that Borger was the Housing Minister at the time the policy was introduced. These interviewees believed that Garrard was hoping that the attacks on Borger and the A-SEPP would damage Borger politically in the run up to a NSW State Election in early 2011.

By the time the steel signs were erected in September 2010, Borger was no longer the NSW Housing Minister. His replacement, Frank Terenzini, was quick to attack Garrard for what he saw as a political maneuver. Terenzini is quoted as having said:

> [I am] appalled because it appears Mayor Garrard is politicising the serious issue of providing much needed homes for people in need … people in his local community … people he is supposed to care about … I'd like to know who approved the use of ratepayer funds to erect 40 anti-government signs outside various State Government building sites in the Parramatta area? (Parramatta Advertiser, 8 September 2010)

In the media, Garrard denied that he was politicising the issue and vowed to continue fighting against the removal of local government planning powers for affordable housing development under the A-SEPP. According to interviewees, the erection of the 'Unsupported development' signs increased the profile of the opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta and intensified community anxiety about proposed affordable housing developments in their area. A developer we interviewed explained to us that in the wake of the erection of the signs by the Lord Mayor, even privately-financed affordable housing projects were encountering fierce opposition simply because the development application included the term 'affordable housing'. According to that interviewee, many residents and councillors believed that 'affordable housing' was simply a euphemism for public housing and were shocked when they were told that not all affordable housing was developed by the SHA:

[Community members] were shocked when we would actually say to them—
even councillors were shocked—when we were saying to them that we are not
[the SHA] … So that's where the problem came about.

This same developer recalled a case where two applications had been submitted by
their firm for physically identical projects; one was identified as affordable housing and
one was not. There was a major difference in the reaction from community members:

You'd lodge an application for even a [building permissible under local
planning controls] as Affordable Housing and you would obtain 20 or 30
objections to it. That's all it was. You'd lodge the same building next door—and
I did this … you'd lodge the same building next door without the word
Affordable Housing, you'd get zero objections—zero.

Some of our interviewees agreed with Minister Terenzini, quoted above, that the
involvement of local politicians in the opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta
was driven by a perceived opportunity for political gain. The A-SEPP and NBJPA were
both introduced by the NSW Labor Government in 2009 and the signs were erected
by Parramatta City Council in September 2010, six months before a State Election in
which the NSW Liberal Party ultimately gained a resounding victory.

Although Mayor Garrard stood as an Independent, rather than being aligned with
either of the major parties, several interviewees suggested to us that Liberal
candidates in Parramatta had used the backlash against affordable housing
development to rally support for themselves and increase dissatisfaction with the
Labor Government. The continuation and escalation of the community opposition was
seen by these interviewees to be in the political interests of Liberal candidates, with
their involvement described as being 'all about votes and nothing else'. Reflecting on
a controversial affordable housing project in Parramatta that was ultimately refused
planning permission in 2011, under a new Liberal-National State Government, one
interviewee revealed that residents in Parramatta had admitted to him that Liberal
candidates had guaranteed them that this particular development would not proceed if
the Liberals gained power in the 2011 State Election:

[the involvement of councillors in the opposition to affordable housing
development in Parramatta] was just a complete political stunt. That's all it
was. Between Labor and Liberal … The Liberals gain power by saying they'll
abolish the affordable housing SEPP … [Regarding one particularly
controversial proposal], angry residents … used to come up to me who I knew
… and they'd say we want to stop this development … I'm saying I'm not sure
how you'll stop this development. [They] said: 'don't worry—we've lobbied. We
helped Liberal get into power and they've promised us they will stop this
development.' And sure enough they did.

What this interviewee, along with several others, was suggesting here is that Liberal
candidates in Parramatta were fuelling the community opposition to affordable
housing as a way of both gaining votes from disgruntled community members and
discrediting the Labor Government in the build-up to the 2011 State election. Once
they had gained power in the 2011 State election, one of the new Liberal
Government's first acts was indeed to amend the A-SEPP to prohibit multi-unit
affordable housing development in certain areas, as we discuss below.

4.4.2 Resident concerns in Parramatta

Although there was consensus among interviewees that the opposition to affordable
housing development in Parramatta escalated as a result of the involvement of local
politicians and the media coverage that certain controversial proposals received, this

was initially prompted by fierce resident opposition to affordable housing development across the council area, from 2009 onwards. Data compiled by the research team from unpublished Parramatta City Council and NSW Government data indicate that a total of 51 affordable housing projects were proposed in Parramatta council area between 2009 and 2011, under the A-SEPP. Thirty-three of these were privately-financed affordable housing projects being built by developers for profit, eighteen were being developed by the SHA. Table 6 shows the scale and type of these projects; the majority were two storey townhouses or multi-unit apartment buildings comprising twenty dwellings or fewer.

Table 6: Types of affordable housing projects proposed in Parramatta 2009–11

	SHA projects	Privately-financed projects	Total projects
Total DAs for affordable housing in Parramatta LGA	18	33	51
One storey buildings	1	-	1
Two storey buildings	17	25	42
Three storey buildings	-	5	5
Internal alterations only		3	3
Boarding house	-	8	8
Seniors housing	2	-	2
1–10 dwellings	3	18	21
11–20 dwellings	12	13	25
21 or more dwellings	3	2	5

Source: Parramatta City Council's 'My Development' online planning portal and the SHA's planning determinations webpage http://www.housing.nsw.gov.au/Home+Buying+and+Building/ Planning+Determinations+and+Notifications

Of the 51 projects proposed, 12 projects received no formal submissions against them. Ten of these were SHA proposals, two were privately-financed. In total, 401 formal submissions were received against the other 39 projects, ranging from just one submission made against a handful of proposals, up to 130 submissions made against one particularly controversial boarding house proposal.

Table 7: Number of submissions against affordable housing development applications (DAs) in Parramatta LGA in 2009–10

	SHA projects	Privately-financed projects	Total projects
Total DAs for affordable housing in Parramatta LGA	18	33	51
Total number of submissions received against all DAs	13	388	401
Total number (%) of DAs receiving no submissions	10 (56%)	2 (6%)	12 (24%)
Total number (%) of DAs receiving at least one submission	8 (44%)	31 (94%)	39 (76%)
Average number of submissions received for those DAs receiving at least one submission	2	13	10

Source: Parramatta City Council's 'My Development' online planning portal and the SHA's planning determinations webpage (see Table 6)

As shown in Table 7, a far greater proportion of privately-financed projects received submissions against them than did SHA proposals, with privately-financed projects also attracting many more submissions against them than SHA projects, on average. This was unexpected because SHA projects comprised 100 per cent affordable housing, whereas privately-financed affordable housing projects were mixed-tenure, comprising some private units for sale. Possible explanations include:

→ Location: most privately-financed affordable housing proposals were located in wealthier parts of Parramatta where levels of homeownership are higher. SHA proposals were mostly in areas where SHA properties were already clustered.

→ Extent of notification: public notification for SHA proposals was generally more limited than notification for privately-financed affordable housing, with standard development assessment processes in place for the latter.

→ Familiarity with planning process for SHA projects: community members may have been unfamiliar with assessment processes for SHA projects, which operated independent of the council's planning process. They may therefore not have known how to make a submission or whether it would get results.

→ Physical form and planning legitimacy: many of the privately-financed affordable housing projects proposed under the A-SEPP comprised physical forms that would not have been permissible under local planning controls. This may have generated increased opposition from community members.

The research team analysed the 401 submissions made against affordable housing proposals in Parramatta for their content: what concerns did community members raise and what were they defending from change? The street addresses of submitters were also mapped (Section 4.4.3).

Table 8 shows the range of concerns raised in submissions; the first column lists the issue of concern raised, the second shows the percentage of submissions in which that particular concern was raised. For example, parking was raised in 84 per cent of submissions. It is worth noting that in several cases, pro-forma submissions were created by objectors, meaning that the same range of concerns was raised on multiple occasions. Where there were multiple submissions made by a single person in relation to a single development application, only the concerns raised in the first

submission were recorded. In most cases, submitters raised multiple concerns, for instance parking and overdevelopment, or crime and property de-valuation. Many submissions were several pages long and contained objections on multiple grounds.

Table 8: Concerns raised in formal submissions made against affordable housing proposals in Parramatta LGA (2009–11)[1]

Issue of concern raised by submitter (I oppose the development proposal because of the potential impact on …)	Percentage of submissions in which this concern was raised (from total of 401)
Parking/traffic	84%
Physical inappropriateness / over-development	73%
Amenity for neighbours	72%
'Out of Character'	62%
Planning assessment process not legitimate	43%
Crime and safety	40%
Property management	40%
Low income of future residents	24%
Transiency of future residents	20%
Own property de-valued	15%
Environmental / infrastructure issues (flooding, sewerage etc.)	12%
Antisocial behaviour	3%

[1]From a total of 401 submissions against 39 development applications.

Source: Submissions accessed through Parramatta City Council's 'My Development' online planning portal

As shown in Table 8, worsening problems with parking and/or traffic were the most commonly raised concerns for people making submissions against affordable housing proposals in Parramatta council area between 2009 and 2011. While parking is a key issue raised in objections to all sorts of development proposals, there was a suggestion from interviewees that community angst over parking was exacerbated in this case by the fact that parking requirements under the A-SEPP were generally less onerous than in the council's local planning controls. This generated confusion among community members and put statutory planners in a difficult position. As one interviewee explained:

> That was part of, I guess, [the] difficulty [for] planners, explaining [to residents] that though they might be valid concerns [about a lack of parking provision], the A-SEPP overrides [local controls] and Council cannot use the lack of parking as a grounds for refusal … and that's hard for people to understand, that the SEPP overrides what professional traffic engineers or planners … think professionally.

Another of the more common concerns was about the physical form of the buildings proposed. A key issue here was the development of two storey multi-unit buildings in areas where most buildings were freestanding homes and where such development would not be permissible under local planning controls (see earlier quote). Although many of the concerns about the physical form of proposed buildings came from residents in neighbouring properties and were to do with the impact of development

on privacy or solar access, others were focused more on the contrast between new and old. Examples of concerns raised in submissions included:

> This proposed development is completely out of character with the existing houses in [this street] and surrounding streets. This development is, essentially a block of flats. There are no flats in [this street] or surrounding streets, only in other areas which are zoned for flats/units.

> This part of [the street] is zoned [low-density residential] and should remain so. An apartment block would be unsuitable for this area as it would stand out like a sore thumb in the street, changing the character and feel of this part of the street where the majority of the residences are houses.

On the issue of built form, many submitters questioned the legitimacy of the assessment process under the A-SEPP. These people could not understand why certain forms of multi-unit affordable housing were permissible in their area under the A-SEPP, when they would not be permissible under local council planning controls. In submissions, many suggested that this was a violation of their rights:

> In our view, the AHSEPP 2009 substantially diminishes our rights, by removing significant planning powers from our elected representatives in the community, thru allowing the Minister dictatorial powers of veto and a 'God-like' approval of developments.

> It should not be that current residents of the Parramatta LGA should have to constantly make submissions against developments that are not in keeping with the current zoning of [low-density residential]. Why bother having zoning criteria in the first place then?

The criticism of the built form of privately-financed affordable housing projects was often particularly intense. Several interviewees claimed that some private developers had sought to obtain the maximum yield possible under the A-SEPP, regardless of context, often resulting in development proposals that were physically quite different in scale to their surroundings. As one interviewee explained:

> Some [for-profit affordable housing developments] were bad. Some weren't in keeping with character. And there isn't to say, some developers didn't perhaps try to … absolutely get completely every single drop of that [density] bonus [from the A-SEPP] that they could in terms of their yield and were perhaps deemed by the public and maybe, quite rightfully, as being greedy developers taking advantage of a SEPP, taking advantage of the disadvantaged and—I think that's a contributing factor as well to some of the negative opinion that's out there …

Interviewees narrated how these developers had 'abused' or 'milked' the A-SEPP in order to maximise their profits. There were stories of luxury apartments being built on top of affordable housing units that offered poor amenity, with the latter said to be incorporated into projects by developers only as a way of meeting the requirements of the A-SEPP, thereby allowing them to achieve higher development densities on the site than would otherwise have been permitted. Because the requirements of the A-SEPP referred to a proportion of total dwellings that must be affordable, rather than a proportion of total floor-space, developers could also minimise the floor area of affordable housing units and maximise floor area in the market housing, maximising their profits. Many interviewees felt that community members in Parramatta had been just as angry about some of these privately-financed developments as they had been about SHA projects. It is important to note, however, that the incentivisation of affordable housing development in this way was actually the intention of the A-SEPP.

As shown in Table 8, issues around the potential for changes to the 'character' of streets and neighbourhoods were raised in more than 60 per cent of submissions. The term character was often used to object to the introduction of new physical forms into an area; submitters would claim that the proposed building would be 'out of character' with its surroundings or that it would damage the existing 'character' of a place. This appropriation of planning language by residents is not unusual in debates over urban change (Dovey et al. 2009), but neither was the use of character by submitters in Parramatta simply about unwanted physical change. Studies have shown that the meanings of character for residents can be about features of physical, cultural or social form, history, everyday experiences or a combination of all these (Davison & Rowden 2012). In some submissions in which character was raised as an issue in Parramatta, the concerns raised were not just about the physical character of the proposed building, but about the likely character of the future tenants themselves. As objectors put it:

> The local neighbourhood consists of families and elderly persons. The tenants that move into [the proposed project] may not be of similar character, therefore not maintaining the character and feel of the local neighbourhood.

> There is a unique character within our neighbourhood which is a combination of the charming character of the buildings in this area as well as the people who reside within them. The proposed development would destroy the character of the streetscape as well as the character of the neighbourhood.

Others raised concerns that new tenants would not be of 'good character', expressing a fear that the tenants would be likely to engage in antisocial behavior and criminal activity:

> The tenants of the new application will not be of good character … with impact of increased violence and crime in the area, as proven in other Affordable Rental Housing Developments.

> … whilst one wishes not to discriminate, what guarantee can … Council give us that the quality of people set to move into the proposed development will not be of low character i.e.: drug addicts, alcoholics, paedophiles and the likes!

These concerns about the 'quality' or 'character' of the people likely to move into the proposed affordable housing projects differ from concerns about changes to the physical character of a place because the behavior, occupancy type and income of residents is not a planning issue. Yet the use of the term character by residents in Parramatta slipped easily from descriptions of physical form into descriptions of social form; objections to particular types of built form often became objections to the types of people that would inhabit them. When someone objects to a development proposal on the grounds that it will be 'out of character', do they mean that the buildings will be different to what currently exists, that the occupants will be different, or both? Is the concept of character a way for people, knowing full well that the type of occupant in a building is not a planning issue, to object to certain types of people moving into their area without them actually having to say this is in so many words?

Closely linked to these issues about social character were a host of issues raised in submissions about the introduction of affordable housing tenants to an area. Twenty-four per cent of all submissions in Parramatta raised concerns about the fact that tenants would have relatively low incomes, while the transiency of future tenants was raised in 20 per cent, especially with regard to boarding house proposals. The language used in submissions revealed a combination of fear, distrust and resentment of affordable housing tenants. Submitters frequently framed themselves and other existing residents as 'solid citizens', 'ratepayers', 'house-proud', 'respectable', 'law-

abiding' and 'taxpayers', with the future affordable housing tenants either implicitly or explicitly positioned as the reverse:

> We find the thought of 'affordable housing' and the type of people it will attract, quite sickening. Whether we like it or not, it is a proven fact that once these types of buildings are erected, problems arise in the neighbourhood and large blocks of units become ghettos or slums … [the types of people] affordable housing and units attract, are ones from the lower parts of society—non-house proud people, ones that don't care about the environment or their neighbourhood and what are called society's 'lowest of low'. Why should our neighbourhood of respectable home buyers and taxpayers have to be subject to living next to these types of people???

> I am fearful that low-income housing attracts antisocial behaviour, long-term unemployed people who do nothing to gain employment but sit around and observe what they can steal. This factor has presented itself in many suburbs with low-income housing and leads to increased crime rates in the area.

Both privately-financed affordable housing projects and SHA projects encountered objections on the basis that future tenants would be deviant and non-compliant with the behavioural norms in the area. Indeed there was widespread confusion regarding the distinction between these two types of affordable housing—many people believed they were the same. Often, they stated in submissions that they believed the term 'affordable housing' was just being used as a euphemism for SHA projects:

> I am troubled, bothered and upset to know that council is proposing a dramatic re-zoning of my neighbouring land under the provision of Affordable Rental Housing SEPP (ARH SEPP). To me, that's Housing Commission in disguise.

> Affordable Rental Housing is the current euphemism for what was once Housing Commission and we believe [this area] already has its unfair share of Affordable Housing.

'Housing Commission' is a former name of the SHA in NSW, but it has negative connotations and is strongly associated with high-rise public housing blocks and dysfunctional suburban public housing estates. The name Housing Commission has not been used officially by the NSW Government for decades, but it was nevertheless used frequently by submitters in Parramatta, often with reference to public housing properties or estates in Parramatta or Sydney that they believed were problematic:

> We do not want 'riff raff' in our street. Has Council seen the state of the Housing Commission in [another street nearby]? That is disgusting. I will not have that turning up in [this street]. I pay my rates and taxes. Put a house, townhouse or villa on that block of land and send Affordable Rental Housing out west. I will protest.

> Housing commission—always results in turning an area into slums. The very visible corner will be unsightly in no time and may even raise the crime rate in the area.

A common refrain from residents was that their area already had its fair share of affordable housing and that it was the turn of other areas to provide this 'service':

> There are already Housing commission tenants living on the other side of [the] railway line … The social obligation of [the A-SEPP] should be equally shared among all of the suburbs, as [this suburb] has already accommodated Housing Commission tenants. It is now the turn of other suburbs to provide this service

> … Council should reject the rezoning as it will dramatically change the character of the area; a change for the worse.

> As a resident … I perceive that this area has more than its fair share of affordable housing, and unfortunately the undesirable aspects of the same.

For many submitters, an objection to the introduction of affordable housing tenants to an area was based in a sense of resentment; the idea that they themselves had worked hard to afford to live in this place, that the introduction of affordable housing would harm their property values and lifestyle, and that it was not fair for neighbouring residents to be able to live in the same area as them, courtesy of the government:

> One of the things I checked when purchasing my home was if there was any public housing close by. I do not want to live in an area with public housing close by. It is not fair that I whom worked hard my whole life to purchase my home [have] to have public housing built nearby, when I specifically checked the area when I purchased my home … Why doesn't NSW Premier Barry O'Farrell or Ms J. Gillard go and build this Affordable Rental Housing SEPP, near their homes?

> We worked hard to buy a property in a single dwelling area this had a high price attached to it to obtain a high standard of living in a peaceful pretty area. Now with these type of development projects 'affordable housing' will reduce adjoining property values and the quality of lifestyle.

While there were objections to all sorts of affordable housing in Parramatta, the fiercest and most numerous objections were made against proposals for boarding houses, especially where the proposed projects were to be located close to schools or parks. There seemed to be a widespread perception that boarding house tenants would be transient single males, often 'recovering drug addicts, ex criminals or illegal immigrants', many of whom would be 'roaming the streets' and 'loitering' outside buildings because they had nothing to occupy their time. From the 162 submissions in Parramatta in which crime and safety were raised as concerns, 139 (86%) of these were made against boarding house proposals. It is worth noting, however, that these results were skewed by an extremely controversial boarding house proposal that received over 130 submissions, many using a pro-forma letter. Typical objections against boarding houses were along the following lines:

> We strongly object to these boarding houses being so close to the [local park] because of the type of people these boarding houses would attract to the area, with drug problems and antisocial behaviour. They are sure to congregate in the park throughout the day and night, making it both unsafe for families during the day, and greatly disturbing the neighbourhood at night.

> The existing residents at this area are predominantly owners and professionals who cherish and care about the local environment. The multiple temporary residents of the proposed boarding house will likely be young people from various disadvantaged groups, likely to bring antisocial behaviour and criminal elements into this area and adversely impact the integrity, tranquillity, privacy and harmony of our local community.

> Being a boarding house, the quality of these people is questionable. This is not a suitable community for the addition of this many transient and questionable occupants.

Beyond concerns about parking, physical form, planning process and the likely tenants themselves, submitters sometimes raised questions about the adequacy of

infrastructure such as sewerage systems and local services, as well as the possible environmental impact of new development on local drainage and vegetation.

With respect to privately-financed affordable housing properties, submitters frequently raised concerns about management responsibilities, especially for boarding house proposals. An issue raised by interviewees, in this respect, was that with the privately-financed affordable housing proposed under the A-SEPP, there was no requirement for developers to identify the organisation that would ultimately be managing the affordable housing component of the project once it was complete. This meant that at the planning stage, local residents often had little or no idea who would be managing the properties, nor who would occupy them. As a representative from a NFP provider explained, most councils required private developers to provide a letter of support from a NFP housing provider as part of their development application under the A-SEPP, but this wasn't the case for all of them and, regardless, it didn't guarantee that the property would be managed by that same NFP housing provider:

> … most Councils in Western Sydney, all they were asking for from the developers, when you lodge [a development application], you've got to show a letter of support from a [NFP] housing provider … Some didn't even put the letter in and still got DA approval … When they released that [A-SEPP] it should have been stated there and then prior to lodgement of your DA you need a management—a signed agreement—a management agreement for these properties to be managed …

A representative from the SHA explained that this had also generated a feeling among community members that private developers were using the provisions of the A-SEPP to make a profit from the sale of the site with DA approval, without having any intention of developing it themselves. For several interviewees, this raised questions about how governments would ensure that the specified affordable housing units were, in fact, used for affordable housing:

> … [with] some of the contentious [projects], they didn't have any mention of who was going to manage the affordable housing component and what their role was going to be. So people just saw those projects and said 'ah—this is private sector development trying to use a loophole to get extra density and extra units and then they'll just flog it and that's the last we'll see of them. Whereas if the [NFP] housing provider is involved much earlier and involved in the pre-DA discussions with neighbours and councils and saying we're going to be managing this project; and we do a good job; and here's some of our projects; and this is our typical tenant, then hopefully that will dispel that idea that it's a private developer's picnic …

The suggestion from some interviewees, then, was that there should have been a requirement for all developers of privately-financed affordable housing to provide more certainty about the management of affordable housing properties, at the development application stage. This may well have removed some of the fear of local community members about who would end up living in the properties.

4.4.3 Who objected to affordable housing?

Among interviewees in Parramatta, there was a widespread view that boarding house proposals attracted the most opposition from community members, with this supported by the evidence from submissions data. While privately-financed affordable housing proposals typically received many more formal submissions against them than did SHA proposals, interviewees did not feel that this meant that they were necessarily more objectionable, and we discussed above some other reasons that submissions against SHA projects may have been fewer in number.

Most interviewees felt that opposition to affordable housing development was most likely in areas where levels of home ownership were high, where dwellings were mostly freestanding, where there was no precedent for affordable housing, and where householders were 'aspirational'; that is, where the community was not overly wealthy nor disadvantaged, but characterised by large numbers of moderate income households, many in owner-occupied dwellings. The team mapped the level of formal objection to affordable housing proposals (by number of submissions) against household income, proportion of households in owner-occupied/private rental/social rental and number of families. The strongest association was between the level of opposition and household income (Figure 5), with the level of opposition generally greater in wealthier parts of Parramatta. The association between level of opposition and household tenure and number of families was considerably weaker.

In addition to mapping the level of opposition to specific proposals as it related to independent variables such as household income and tenure type, we also mapped the street addresses of submitters. The aim here was to get a sense of how localised a phenomenon the opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta was: were all submitters next-door neighbours of development proposals or did the opposition spread further afield? The results of this exercise are shown in Figure 6. These indicate that the vast majority of submissions against affordable housing proposals were from people living close by—usually within a hundred metres or so. Where submissions had been received from householders with street addresses outside Parramatta council area, these were mostly linked to a particularly controversial boarding house proposal next to a school, where staff at the school and the Parent Teachers Associations were said by local residents to have become involved.

Figure 5: Objections to SHA and privately-financed affordable housing projects
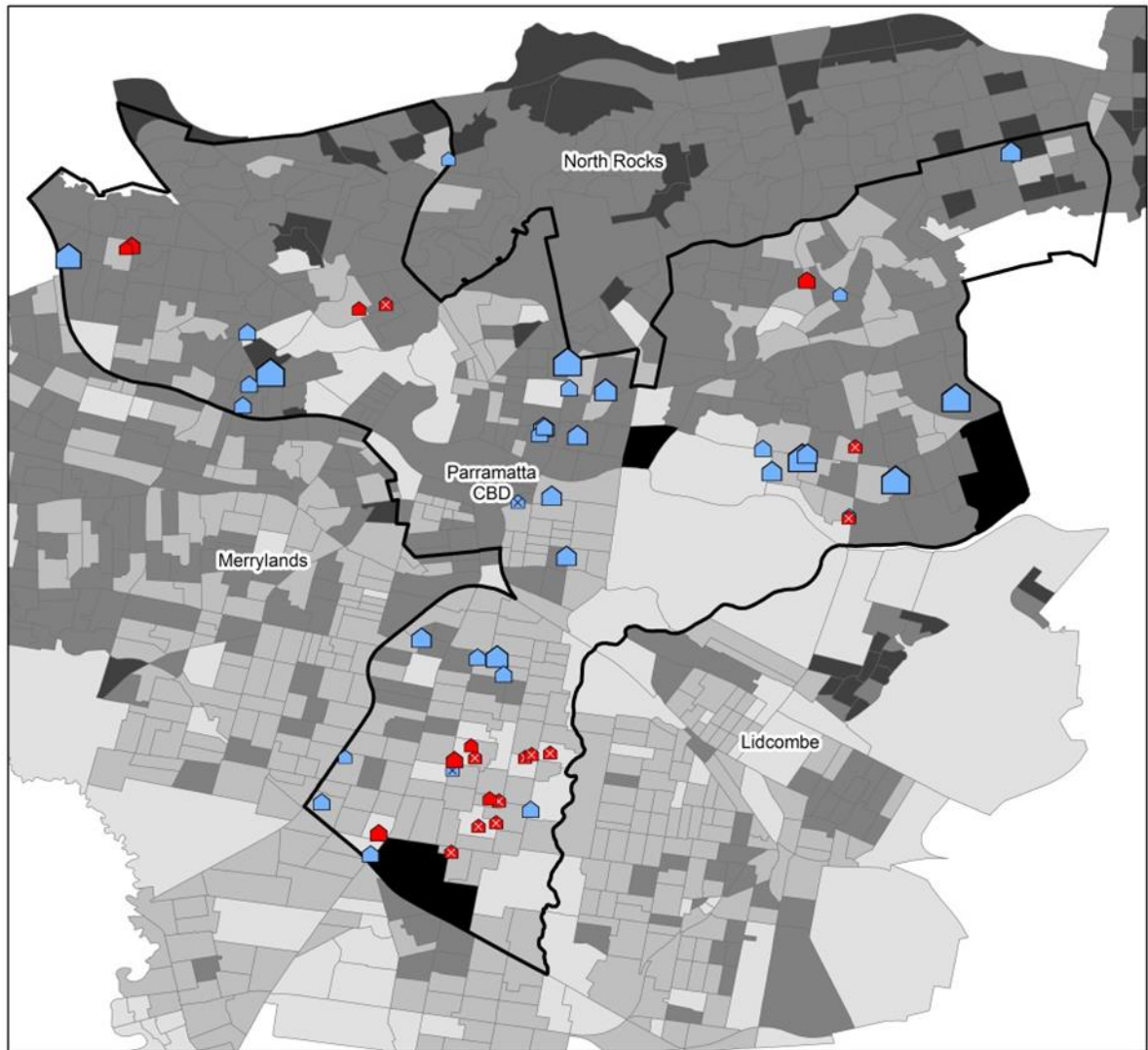
The shading shows variations in household income across the council area. Darker shading indicates areas with a higher proportion of households earning above the median income for Parramatta council area. The house-shaped symbols each represent individual development proposals, with their size on the map reflecting the number of submissions received.
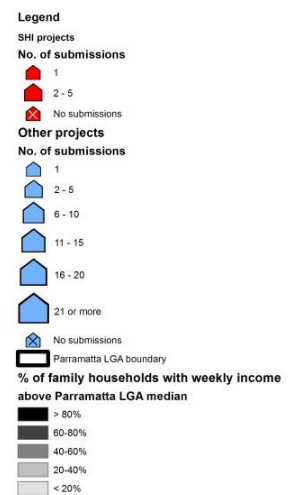
Figure 6: The street addresses of submitters in Parramatta
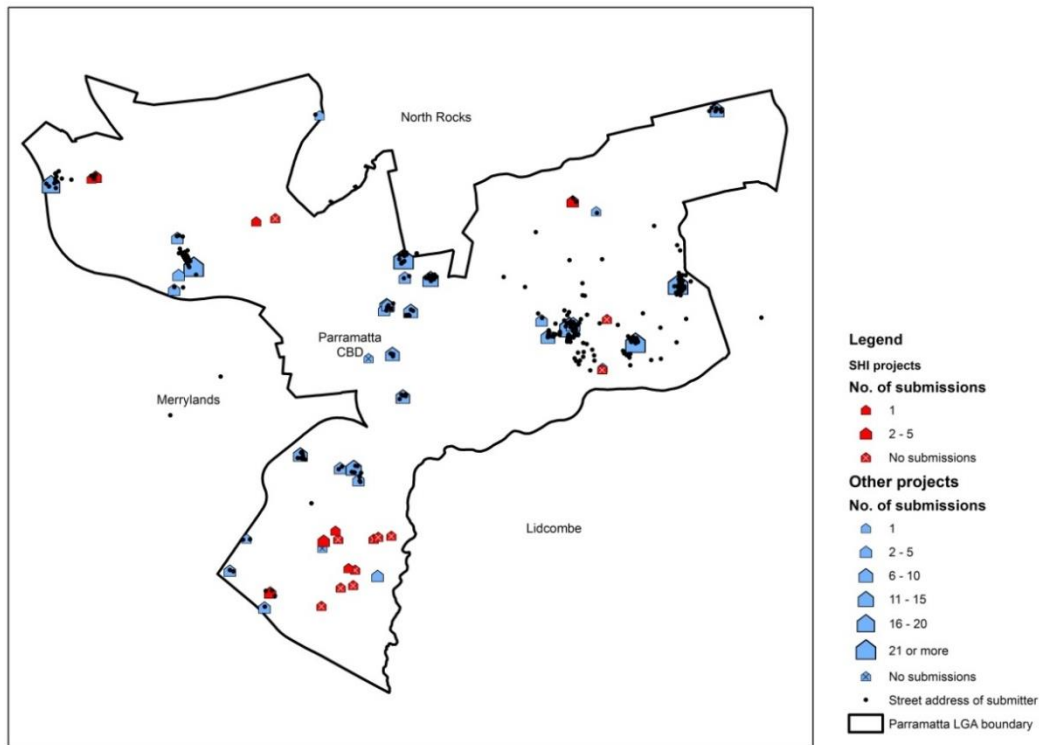
4.5   Amendments to the A-SEPP and their impact

In May 2011, some changes were made to the A-SEPP in response to the high level of community opposition to affordable housing development in Parramatta, as well as a handful of other high-profile cases such as Ryde, the Central Coast and Sydney's north shore. A new Liberal-National Coalition Government had been elected in March 2011 and an early act by the Planning Minister, Brad Hazzard, was to make changes to the A-SEPP that were intended to reduce the physical impact of new affordable housing developments. In media reports of the changes, Hazzard is quoted as saying that the A-SEPP, in its previous form, provided 'an avenue for small-time developers to rip into local communities and change [their] entire face', and that ' … for the agony the communities were suffering there was no evidence that people who seriously needed affordable housing were getting it' (Sydney Morning Herald, May 20, 2011).

Several changes were made to the A-SEPP through the 2011 amendment (Davison et al. 2012), following public consultation. Firstly, changes to the wording of the A-SEPP tied the required proportion of affordable housing in privately-financed projects to floor-space, rather than to dwelling numbers as it had previously been. A second change was that multi-unit developments were no longer permissible under the A-SEPP in areas where only single dwellings were permissible under local planning controls. Where multi-unit developments were not permissible under local planning controls, multi-unit affordable housing proposals under the A-SEPP could no longer be granted development consent unless their compatibility with the 'character of the local area' had been taken into consideration.

Interviewees from private and NFP housing developers told us that as a direct result of these amendments, large numbers of privately-financed affordable housing projects that had been prepared and lodged under the original version of the A-SEPP were subsequently refused consent by councils. Where councils had been hostile to the A-

SEPP, they now had an opportunity to refuse development proposals under the A-SEPP, so long as they could demonstrate that the proposal was not consistent with the area's 'character'. For-profit and NFP developers explained to us that, following the 2011 amendments to the A-SEPP, they had been forced to abandon projects because they were no longer permissible under the A-SEPP, and that it had been necessary for them to invest much staff time in making amendments to other projects that had already been lodged as development applications. The view from for-profit and NFP developers of affordable housing to whom we spoke was that the amendments to the A-SEPP had done irreparable damage to the policy in terms of its appeal to private sector developers. This was principally because the 2011 amendments had removed the provisions that were the most financially appealing, especially the opportunity to develop multi-unit projects in areas zoned for low-density residential uses only. The density bonuses that were retained, apparently, did not offer the same level of financial return.

4.6 Reflections on the Parramatta case study

4.6.1 The influence of politics and planning process on community opposition to affordable housing development

Just prior to the introduction of the A-SEPP, Parramatta City Council had published its own Affordable Housing Policy (Parramatta City Council 2009). In this sense, the Council and its officers were not opposed to the principle of affordable housing development. However, what was objectionable to councillors and officers was the way that the A-SEPP, when it was introduced, overrode Parramatta's local planning controls to permit certain forms of development that would not otherwise have been permissible. Both politicians and officers also resented the fact that, in their opinion, the Department of Planning had not consulted with them in any meaningful way on the design and implementation of the A-SEPP.

The A-SEPP was introduced in 2009 at around the same time as the announcement of the SHI, meaning that significant numbers of new affordable housing properties could be developed by the SHA under its provisions. The SHA owned large areas of well-located land in Parramatta and much of this was subsequently redeveloped in 2009 and 2010 as part of the SHI. Unlike many other parts of Sydney, market conditions in Parramatta also meant that the density bonuses offered to private developers under the A-SEPP made sense financially (Davison et al. 2012). The combined effects of the SHA development program and these favourable market conditions for privately-financed affordable housing generated a significant increase in the level of affordable housing development in Parramatta from 2009 until 2011.

Much of this affordable housing development was controversial from the outset, with the involvement of local politicians raising the profile of the opposition and perhaps giving it greater legitimacy. Without local politicians repeatedly attacking the NSW Government in the media, erecting the 'Unsupported development' signs and door-knocking in an effort to raise local awareness of SHA development proposals among residents, it seems likely that the opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta would not have been as high in profile, nor as widespread. Community members cannot be blamed for becoming fearful of proposed affordable housing developments in their area after reading the coverage of opposition elsewhere in the local media, taking visits to their home by councillors who alerted them to SHA development proposals in their street, and after seeing the Council's highly-visible objection to SHA proposals in the form of three metre steel signs. Effectively, what all of this did was generate a panicked atmosphere in which people were far more likely to object to development proposals, even where they may not have been inclined to object under normal

circumstances. As a developer illustrated in a quote above, development proposals became objectionable and objected-to simply because they were 'affordable housing'.

Given that local politicians played such an important role in the opposition in Parramatta, it is important to understand why they did so. Many of our interviewees were in no doubt that the involvement of local politicians in the opposition in Parramatta was driven both by issues and concerns relating to the A-SEPP, and by the perceived opportunity for political gain. The overriding of local planning controls by the A-SEPP and a perceived lack of consultation on its design and implementation generated ill-feeling towards the policy among many councils. This was perhaps exacerbated by the fact that planning officers and politicians from those same councils were responsible for assessing and determining many of the development applications that were forthcoming under its provisions. At the same time, local politicians saw an opportunity with the opposition to discredit the NSW Labor Government, increase their own profile, and gain local support (in the form of votes) from community members. As one interviewee put it, some politicians in Parramatta shifted their political position on affordable housing simply to gain political advantage:

> [The opposition] was more than just being [about more affordable housing being developed in the area]. I think that in local government [political] terms there is a high degree of political competitiveness in some council areas. And certainly that was the case in Parramatta—that councillors would compete for column space in local newspapers and in my mind would sometimes take positions that weren't even their own positions, just to garner some support or in fact more likely just to have a negative impact on an alternative candidate. So what happened was that the politics [of the opposition] were sort of exploited in a very cynical way by some councillors …

According to the same interviewee, it was easy for these politicians to scaremonger in an effort to gain support or discredit opponents because there was already so much underlying prejudice against affordable housing residents:

> … the problem with affordable housing is [that] it's very easy for politicians to exploit the fears of the community by telling them that you're going to get a slum next door to you.

While the A-SEPP and NBJPA enabled the SHA to deliver over 6000 new dwellings under the SHI and gave the NFP and for-profit housing sector a far greater role in affordable housing provision in NSW, there were elements of the design and implementation of the policy that were inevitably going to draw criticism from local councils, and so it proved. Furthermore, the timing of the opposition presented an opportunity for political candidates in the run-up to the 2011 NSW Election, and the acrimonious relationship between the Mayor of Parramatta and the Housing Minister made conflict even more likely. Coupled with the winding up of the SHI, the 2011 amendments to the A-SEPP reduced the level of community opposition dramatically. However, some interviewees suggested that the remaining provisions are no longer financially appealing to for-profit developers, and that private sector confidence in the policy has been irreparably damaged.

4.6.2   The nature of community opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta

In terms of the housing market context for the opposition, the map of submissions made against affordable housing proposals (Figure 5) shows that there were far higher numbers of submissions made against privately-financed affordable housing developments, most of which were proposed in the northern parts of Parramatta council area, than there were against SHA projects which tended to be concentrated in the south. As we outlined in Section 4.4.2, this could have been because of

differences in the planning processes for SHA and privately-financed affordable housing. However, it could also be because many of the SHA projects involved the redevelopment of existing SHA properties, and because many adjoining households in these cases were also living in SHA properties: it seems reasonable to propose that affordable housing residents may be less likely to object to affordable housing proposals than people living in private accommodation.

Many interviewees believed that opposition to affordable housing development in Parramatta had tended to be fiercest where there was no precedent for multi-unit housing or affordable housing, and where incomes and the proportion of local residents who were homeowners, rather than renters, was high. This suggestion was supported to some extent by our mapping exercise. There was also a commonly-held view that a crucial factor necessary for the opposition to escalate and become high profile was the involvement of ringleaders willing to devote time and energy to a campaign. In contrast, many 'battlers' were seen by interviewees to simply be too busy worrying about day-to-day survival to engage in opposition to affordable housing.

As shown in Section 4.4.2, analysis of 401 submissions against affordable housing proposals in Parramatta in 2009 and 2010 suggests that parking/traffic, physical form/density, and amenity (overlooking, shadowing, privacy etc.) are the main concerns raised by opponents of projects, with each of these issues raised in over 70 per cent of submissions. A sense that the proposed development was 'out of character' was also an issue for over 60 per cent of submitters, with this being about both physical and social form, as discussed above. Over 40 per cent of submissions questioned the legitimacy of the A-SEPP planning approval process. Considerable resentment was apparent in many submissions, particularly regarding the ways in which the A-SEPP could override local planning controls for parking and physical form: submitters could not understand how or why this was possible. In effect, the atypical planning assessment process under the A-SEPP and the violation of local planning controls gave people who sought to veil their objection to affordable housing another way to do so.

The fact that a proposed project would be occupied by relatively low-income people was raised as a concern by nearly a quarter of submitters, with a fifth raising concerns that the people living there would be transient. As is apparent from the quotes above, submissions often contained raw emotional responses and revealed clear prejudice against affordable housing residents. For many of our interviewees from local and state government, it was no surprise that planning-related concerns (parking, physical form, amenity) were raised more often than issues to do with low-income people, crime or property values. They felt that objectors knew that they were more likely to gain traction if they focussed on planning issues, rather than taking the line that they simply didn't want poor people living in their neighbourhood. As one put it:

> … for the majority of objectors it really doesn't matter which objection you're using, the intention is to stop a development because you're emotionally opposed to it. It doesn't matter whether you're using traffic or parking … or density … people will use any argument they possibly can to stop something. So people are really quite dishonest in their opposition.

The figures in Section 4.4.2 then need to be read with caution. Certainly, most interviewees shared this above-stated view that the people objecting to affordable housing on grounds of parking, density or overlooking, were often also concerned about living near affordable housing residents, even if they did not identify the latter as a concern in their submissions. From interviewees, there was a sense that for many members of the public, affordable housing conjured images of poorly-maintained and crime-ridden tower blocks, and of residents with antisocial or criminal behaviours. As

one interviewee explained, this image was a product of the way that the public housing sector has been residualised in recent years:

> Generally, public housing is associated [by the public] with high rates of crime, with low social capital, with people who are perceived as being undesirable. And that's because governments have allowed [public] housing to residualise to people on very, very low incomes, and there's a high proportion of people with mental illnesses and people exiting prisons and so on. So it's completely understandable that, at one level, the community would say 'well, public housing—do I want to live in a community where there's lots of those people living around me, is that a good thing?

In Parramatta, few community members seemed to realise that affordable housing is increasingly developed and/or managed by the NFP sector rather than by government, and that much of the affordable housing being developed in Parramatta under the A-SEPP and NBJPA between 2009 and 2011 was actually privately-financed housing targeted at moderate income groups. Many people instead believed that the term 'affordable housing' was simply being used as a euphemism for 'Housing Commission'. Some interviewees also suggested that there was also a lack of understanding of what affordable housing and the A-SEPP were within local government. As one representative of a NFP developer put it:

> But I think from within council itself, that lack of information and understanding about what affordable housing really was, was incredible. Like nearly every council that we went to visit, we had to sit there and explain to the planning department … really what the [A-SEPP] was there to do.

We return to discuss the terminology of affordable housing and education and awareness in Chapters 8 and 9.

It is important to note that while it may be true, as many interviewees suggested, that people often use planning concerns to veil an underlying objection to affordable housing development in their neighbourhood, many of the concerns raised by residents in Parramatta regarding density and parking can be seen as quite reasonable. That is because the A-SEPP permitted physical forms and parking standards that were not permissible under local planning controls, and it can therefore be no wonder that community members objected when standards in these local planning controls appeared to be contravened.

It was clear from submissions data that the level of organisation in the community opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta between 2009 and 2011 was highly varied. For certain controversial proposals, petitions were arranged and pro-forma letters were created, residents contacted the media and local and state politicians, door-knocked neighbours and arranged their own community meetings. Based on the discussions with Parramatta residents in interview-surveys for this study (see Chapter 7), it seemed that in most of these cases, there was a small group of 'provokers' who orchestrated the opposition, with other people in the neighbourhood sometimes making submissions or signing petitions as much to satisfy these provokers as to voice their own views. The map of submissions also illustrates that opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta was a highly localised phenomenon: people generally only objected to proposals that were in their street or an adjoining street.

Initially, community anger and resentment about affordable housing development in Parramatta was directed mostly at planning officers and politicians at Parramatta City Council. However, following the erection of the 'Unsupported development' signs and the publication of various newspaper articles in which councillors spoke out against the developments that were occurring, it became clear to community members that

the Council had little control over the development that was taking place, and that it did not support it. The target of much of their anger was then re-directed towards the NSW Government and David Borger—the Housing Minister and Member for the seat of Granville, part of Parramatta council area.

Several interviewees were of the view that Borger and the NSW Labor Government, more generally, had suffered politically at the 2011 State election from the controversy surrounding affordable housing development in Parramatta and other extreme cases such as Ryde and the Central Coast. Borger himself reflected in an interview that although the opposition had probably cost him his seat at the next election, he was proud that the SHA, under his Ministership, had been able to deliver so many new dwellings under the A-SEPP provisions:

> My view was we had a unique opportunity to deliver a project [the SHI] that was going to create jobs … and that I had a responsibility to push this program through, even if it was at my own expense—which it was [because of the controversy that it created in Borger's constituency and the resulting backlash against him, with him losing his seat at the 2011 State election].

Many other government and non-government interviewees believed that it simply wouldn't have been possible to deliver the 6000 SHI dwellings under standard planning assessment processes. As one interviewee stated, it was only through this fast-tracked assessment process, with reduced opportunities for community involvement, that so many new dwellings could be delivered in such a short period:

> And frankly in my entire life this is the thing I am most proud of—that we built 6000 homes for poor people and we didn't give a f**k whether people objected. Because otherwise it just would not have happened.

Judging by the difficulty that the research team encountered in identifying community activists for interview in Parramatta as part of this research, and despite the high profile of the activism just two or three years prior, it would appear that most of the community opposition to affordable housing in Parramatta was ephemeral in that it related to specific development proposals, with any community organisations, networks or increased participation in civic life seemingly dropping away once a decision had been made by the assessment authority. The planners we interviewed had often been the ones taking calls from irate community members, and they too suggested that the lifecycle of opposition had usually been short-lived.

4.6.3 Concluding comments

While Parramatta was among a handful of cases in NSW where there was powerful and high-profile opposition to the development of affordable housing under the A-SEPP, it is important to note that the majority of affordable housing projects proposed in 2009 and 2010, across the State as a whole, were not heavily opposed, if they were opposed at all.

This notwithstanding, the controversy in 'extreme' cases (Flyvbjerg 2006) such as Parramatta was seen by interviewees to have had an influence on the outcomes of the 2011 NSW Election and to have ultimately led to significant amendments being made to the A-SEPP in the same year. This is not to mention the energy and resources that were put into the opposition by community members and local politicians, the anger and resentment of the NSW Government that it bred in them, and the financial costs faced by private developers, especially following the 2011 amendments to the A-SEPP. There are also other unquantifiable impacts that may result from such high-profile opposition to affordable housing: it may act to further stigmatise subsidised housing, may generate increased fear of affordable housing

residents and can damage faith in government and planning assessment processes. Perhaps most importantly, it can potentially create issues for the people that ultimately end up living in the controversial affordable housing projects; how might someone feel as they move into a new property when they know that both their neighbours and elected officials objected to its development?

SHI projects generally received fewer submissions against them than did privately-financed developments. Almost all of the SHI projects also proceeded to the construction stage with little or no delay, albeit sometimes with amendments made to original proposals, while many of the privately-financed projects were delayed considerably, amended or refused planning permission by Parramatta City Council. Indeed, in looking for completed privately-financed projects for the interview-surveys (Chapter 7), we found that few of the privately-financed projects proposed under the A-SEPP had been completed by the time of the fieldwork, and that many had been refused planning permission or abandoned following the 2011 amendments to the A-SEPP. In this sense, the controversy over affordable housing development in Parramatta, although mostly directed at the SHA and the Minister for Housing, only really had a significant effect on the outcomes of affordable housing projects being initiated by private developers.

5   PORT PHILLIP, VICTORIA

5.1   Background /Introduction

This chapter reports empirical findings from Port Phillip, Victoria and includes an in-depth analysis of a particularly controversial project in the Port Phillip suburb of Port Melbourne. The City of Port Phillip is an interesting case study for several reasons. Firstly, it has a long history of building social housing. Between 1985 and 2006, the City of Port Phillip and the former City of St Kilda built 17 affordable housing projects (Press 2009, p.8). This made the City of Port Phillip, in partnership with Port Phillip Housing Association (PPHA), the largest local government affordable housing developer in Australia over this period (Gurran 2003, p.403; CPP 2012a, p.8). Secondly, although the City of Port Phillip has a long history of building affordable housing, it was not until the late 1990s that opposition from residents started to form (Press 2009, p.8). Finally, despite the growing opposition to affordable housing proposals, the commitment to delivering social housing remains strongly supported by the Council. However, this commitment creates a unique, yet significant, tension between the aspirational community brought forth by gentrification in recent years and the deliberate actions by Council to preserve social housing.

The chapter begins by briefly outlining the historical, demographic and physical characteristics of the City of Port Phillip. The nature of community opposition to affordable housing in recent years in Port Phillip, how it arose, and the strategies used by opponents to gain traction are examined, especially with reference to a highly controversial project in Port Melbourne. The chapter is based on interviews with 15 people, including representatives from the SHA, the Victorian Planning Department, local government planners, politicians and various NFP housing organisations. The chapter also draws on local, State government and media reports and Council minutes. Lastly, the chapter discusses the findings from the analysis of 267 planning submission made by residents and traders in opposition to affordable housing between the years 2006–11.

5.1.1   Port Phillip

The City of Port Phillip is located in inner Melbourne, across the Yarra River from Melbourne CBD (Figure 7). It is celebrated for its diverse culture and history, and its strong culture of community activism. Since the 1994 council amalgamations that saw Port Melbourne, South Melbourne and St Kilda amalgamated into what is now the City of Port Phillip Council, the area has been the focus of some of the most fierce community activism campaigns seen in Melbourne. Most notable is the opposition to encroaching development upon the Esplanade Hotel—a historic and popular live music venue (Shaw 2005) in the 1990s and to a controversial commercial development on what was called the St Kilda 'Triangle' Site in the 2000s (Mouat et al. 2013). As the experience with the Esplanade Hotel and the St Kilda Triangle suggest, residents of Port Phillip are active in civic matters and there is a precedent for local community members to mobilise in opposition to unwanted development proposals.

In addition to being the home of a politically active population, Port Phillip has a socio-economically diverse and highly educated population typically earning more than the median income for both Melbourne and Australia. As revealed by the 2011 Census, 54 per cent of the population in Port Phillip have an individual weekly gross income of $1000 or higher compared with just 35 per cent in all of Greater Melbourne (ABS 2011). This high weekly income is accompanied by an increasing number of owner occupiers in the area. Comparing Census data for Port Phillip LGA from 1991 and 2011 shows an increase in owner-occupied households (from 14.6% in 1991 to 22.4%

in 2011, according to ABS 2011 data). In comparison, the percentage of renting households has stayed relatively constant, with a slight increase in private rental and a drop in social housing.

Figure 7: Location of City of Port Phillip local government area (LGA) in Melbourne Greater Metropolitan Area

Buildings in the City of Port Phillip are an eclectic mix of heritage-listed two storey Victorian terraces and workers cottages, medium density flats, high rise apartments (mostly along main streets and near Port Phillip Bay) and postwar fibro homes. Each of the suburbs in the City of Port Phillip contains a main commercial street comprising a mix of low, medium and high rise commercial, cultural, government and residential buildings. Recently, several of these main streets have been subject to processes of 'urban intensification' (Jenks 2000) especially along public transport routes. While these main streets can be described as medium density and in some cases high density, areas beyond the main streets remain predominantly low density usually with one to two storey buildings.

Even though the 2011 census data shows a relatively affluent demographic with increasing numbers of owner occupiers, the City of Port Phillip still retains the reputation of being a socially diverse and inclusive area. Underpinning these claims are policy documents which state that the Council is in support of retaining and preserving resident diversity and inclusiveness. The Council's Community Plan (2007), which provides a guide for all other Council documents, positions inclusiveness and diversity as one of the core community values, as outlined in the following vision statement:

> The goals of social equity, economic viability, environmental responsibility and cultural vitality remain central to our desire to foster a sustainable and harmonious future.

> We acknowledge there is shared responsibility to ensure everyone, regardless of age or cultural or socio-economic background, can access services that meet their needs and can participate in community life.

We want our Council to demonstrate leadership in community participation, strategic planning, advocacy to other levels of government and accountability to the community (CPP 2007, p.10)

Under the Community Plan lies the Council Plan which directs Council's activities and is guided by four strategic directions, one of which is 'Strengthening our diverse and inclusive community' (CPP 2012b, p.17). In addition to these plans, the sentiment of inclusiveness and diversity is echoed in the Council's 2007 Housing Strategy. This strategy is underpinned by the following values:

→ Recognition that sustainable communities are socially diverse communities.

→ Recognition that affordable and appropriate housing assists to maintain personal well-being and health.

→ Encouragement of community tolerance towards social disadvantage and diversity.

→ Support for policy that is firmly based on social equity and social justice principles.

Council's commitment to strengthening inclusivity and diversity in the Port Phillip LGA is firmly supported by this matrix of policies. Entrenching this core value across a wide range of key policy documents creates a strong foundation of support, which elected officials can draw upon in their efforts to back social housing in their jurisdictions. As one council officer remarked:

What we find is—it's probably true for a lot of local governments and a lot of municipalities—is that if it's not in the council or corporate plan, it's hard to continue to get the programs and initiatives consistently supported, because the council plan is usually the key policy document that councillors refer to and senior executives refer to decide whether it should be supported, whether it either gets up to council in the first place, or once it gets to council whether the councillors are going to support it.

Local politicians and members of State Parliament, as elected members of government, operate within a politically charged environment. Residents look to elected officials to support their cause because doing so will give their issue political traction. Consequently, elected officials are in positions of leadership which they can use to speak out in support of or against any particular development proposal. For those who choose to support affordable housing, the importance of strong policy and transparent and well-articulated values, which can be used to validate their positions, cannot be overstated, as one local politician said:

Affordable housing was always on the council agenda. So I had comfort and support in these particular projects because council had a strong commitment to affordable housing.

In addition to strong policy however, the Council also invested in a Housing Trust to preserve low cost housing in Port Phillip. The trust was formally established in 2005 when the Trust Deed was executed to protect social housing assets from any possible future change in government priorities in a gentrifying community. The Trust also insulates existing low cost housing from developers who wish to turn these properties into market housing.

Between 1985 and 2006 housing projects were funded through joint ventures between the City of Port Phillip and the SHA (CPP 2012a, p.9). Since the establishment of the Port Phillip Housing Trust in 2005 when the Trust Deed was executed, the Council has not been a direct provider of social housing. Today PPHA, which was set up in partnership with the Council in 1986, is the trustee company and the main developer

of affordable housing in Port Phillip. The Trust removes Council as the owner and developer of community housing (CPP 2012a, p.10) and as a result removes the tension and perceived conflict of interest between the roles of the planning authority and the developer. When the Housing Trust was established, Council transferred a total of 12 community housing projects valued in 2007 at $36 million to PPHA (CPP 2012a, p.11) and from 2005–06 to 2014–15 PPHA will receive approximately $4 million in case contributions from Council (CPP 2012a, p.11).

Today the Trust is Council's instrument to ensure that community housing is protected and a Trust Deed provides some guarantee that the Trust will continue to fulfill its primary obligation into the future, which is:

> That affordable housing is provided to persons with significant links to the City of Port Phillip (and who meet the eligibility criteria of SHA)

> That contributions towards housing provided under the Trust are retained in perpetuity and are quarantined for that purpose with the Port Phillip municipal area (CPP 2012a, p.11).

Port Phillip also benefits from the presence of several not-for-profit housing organisations. In Victoria community housing developers are registered through the *Registrar of Housing Agencies* (under the Housing Act 1983) as an association or a provider (CPP 2012, p.5). PPHA is a registered housing association, and so operates as a growth organisation and is therefore subject to a higher level of regulation, yet with a higher growth capacity, it is also subject to more development risk (CPP 2012a, p.5). In addition to PPHA, two registered housing providers also operate in the City of Port Phillip that, in contrast to housing associations, focus on property and tenancy roles and are subject to lower levels of regulation. The two housing providers have large portfolios but have limited development capacities compared with PPHA in terms of the number and size of projects that can be undertaken. In contrast, PPHA has the capacity to undertake multiple projects at one time (CPP 2012a, p.6).

In Victoria, the SHI (Chapter 1) invested approximately $1.265 billion into affordable housing equating to fund the development of 4500 new rental homes for low-income earners, the homeless, or those experiencing family violence (Victorian Government 2010, p.2). As discussed in Chapters 1 and 4, the Australian Government set strict delivery timelines for new dwellings under the SHI and in order to meet those timelines, the Victorian Planning Scheme was amended to give the Planning Minister responsibility for approving SHI projects. Public notification was exempted under this amendment as was any kind of formal community consultation or opportunity to appeal through the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal.

All SHI projects underwent an assessment against existing municipal planning schemes. First, developers had to employ an independent town planner to certify their own projects. Once a project was certified, the proposal was submitted to the Victorian Government Planning Authority to be reviewed by planning staff and then recommended to an internal Standing Advisory Committee, which provided an expert and semi-independent review of the application. This committee, which was made up of a heritage specialist, an urban design specialist, a planning specialist and sometimes a transport consultant, would consider recommendations on the various applications that came through before submitting recommendations to the ministerial delegate for sign off. However, if there was an issue identified, the proposal would be sent back to the planner managing the process internally who would then be tasked with liaising with the developer regarding necessary changes. When the project was deemed compliant, a planning permit would be issued.

Although this process excluded community members from commenting on development proposals, local councils were able to provide feedback over a two-week period. Where councils had concerns, and where the Victorian Government saw these concerns to be related to planning issues, amendments would be made before the permit was issued. Overall, the approval process for each project took approximately a month, which is considerably less time than would usually be taken under standard assessment processes.

5.2   Port Melbourne case study

The suburb of Port Melbourne is located approximately 5 kilometres south of Melbourne's CBD and was settled in 1839 as Melbourne's main port and home to many of the city's early industries. Over time, Port Melbourne evolved into a predominantly residential area, retaining many single-fronted workers cottages and Victorian period dwellings. Today, Port Melbourne is one of Melbourne's most affluent neighborhoods with higher than average incomes. In 2007, the City of Port Phillip considered that a surface car park located at 121 Liardet Street [known as Kyme Place] was under-utilised. Kyme Place, which is located forty metres east of Bay Street (Figure 8), Port Melbourne's main street, exists at the juncture between a Residential 1 Zone which is covered by Heritage overlay and a Business 1 Zone (CPP 2009, p.30). To the west of the site is an organic grocer and to the east and north mostly single or double story detached residential dwellings, as well as one five level apartment building. Initially, the Council considered redeveloping the site as a private residential development. However, this plan was abandoned in May 2007 and an alternative proposal for a four storey rooming house consisting of thirty-one units was developed. As one local politician noted in an interview 'there was a sense of injustice in my mind that people who had lived and worked in the area can no longer afford to live here'. With the new approach, land would be transferred to PPHA to build affordable housing as an air space development (CPP 2010b, p.3). The development would result in a loss of 11 car spaces.

Figure 8: View northeast along Bay Street, the main commercial street in Port Melbourne. Kyme Place lies just 40 metres to the east

The Kyme Place car park was a surface car park with 33 spaces. It had been owned by Council since 1988 when it was purchased using borrowed funds, and was later offset through a cash in-lieu scheme (CPP 2010b, p.6). In a Council report the scheme imposed few limitations upon CPP regarding future land development on this site:

> The 'cash in lieu' scheme does not affect council's ownership of the land. The way the former Port Melbourne City Council acquired the land in the late 1980s did not amount to a 'statutory trust' in legal terms, and does not limit the

council's legal ability to dispose of or redevelop the land in any way (CPP 2010b, p.6).

Council would keep 22 out of the 33 car park spaces, however to honour the cash in lieu scheme and to minimise the loss of public car parking spaces, the Council resolved to replace the 11 lost car park spaces by creating new on-street car parking locations; two in front of the development and 10 additional spaces nearby (CPP 2010b, p.6) for a net increase of one car space.

5.2.1 Engaging residents

In April 2008, the Council commenced a statutory planning process to transfer the airspace above the former car park to PPHA and Council would retain ownership of the car park (CPP 2008). The development was deemed 'affordable, rental housing for lower income households with residency links to Port Phillip' (CPP, n.d.b) and its need was communicated strongly by the then mayor of the City of Port Phillip Janet Cribbes in an April 2008 news release:

> All this may sound rather complicated … but it's not. It's just a smart way of creating some desperately needed community housing by building in air space on an under-utilised car park …. With housing prices through the roof in Port Melbourne, this deal represents one of the few opportunities to secure new affordable housing in the area. It's a win-win situation. Thirty-one single people in need get a roof over their heads (CPP 2008a).

It is a statutory requirement in Victoria that councils notify residents of proposals of this sort and invite public submissions, and that this is followed by an open meeting that allows those who want to speak to have a chance to voice their concerns about the sale (CPP 2008b, p.70). In advance of the public submission period, PPHA distributed a notice to residents describing the process for selecting tenants and advising that the tenants will be those with established links to the Port Phillip LGA as well as key workers working in Port Phillip. The notice also included background information about PPHA, namely information about its track record and that it must comply with the standards set out by an independent regulator. PPHA also included a statement about community housing. The notice stated:

> Community housing is an affordable alternative to the private rental market or public housing where rents are set as a proportion of residents' income. Community housing exists all over the world and is expanding in Australia helping local residents remain in their communities in spite of increasing housing costs (PPHA 2008).

The local council also held a number of resident meetings about the Kyme Place development application. Table 9 describes the process that was undertaken for the transfer of land statutory process.

Table 9: Statutory process to transfer land

Meeting Type	Date	Statutory process	Action
Town hall meeting (Information session, including Q&A period)	April 2008	Transfer of land	Status of proposal. Decisions required by Council. Processes involved in decision-making. Opportunities available to influence decision-making.
Public notification period	May 2008	Transfer of land	Advertised according to the Section 52 of the Planning and Environment Act 1987. Fourteen-day period. Individual notices sent to 161 residents surrounding the site, two signs erected on site and notice placed in two local newspaper. (CPP 2009, p.40)
Submissions received	May 2008	Transfer of land	Fifty-one submissions received; 45 in opposition and six in support.

Source: Unpublished material including minutes from statutory meetings.

The submission process turned up a large number of people in opposition to the proposed development itself, with comments extending beyond simply responding to the proposed land transfer. Indeed the fact that the proposal was presented first as a matter of land transfer and then second as a development proposal, resulted in significant confusion within the community. As one local politician stated:

> There is a lot to wrap your head around. I think for the community that was part of the challenge. There were all these different processes and they didn't really understand them because they were quite complicated. I think for us as a council, in a statutory sense they are separate processes, but in the community's mind it's all one thing: 'you are going to put this rooming house here'. We started off running them as separate processes but it got very confusing for people. I don't know how we overcome that. If you are selling property you have to go through certain processes, if you are doing a planning permit you have to go through other proper processes, but in the community's mind they just didn't want it.

The Council took unique measures to prepare for the opposition to the Kyme Place land transfer and development by producing a 'Communications & Stakeholder Relations Plan' (CPP 2008c). The plan described the proposal, objectives, milestones, key stakeholders, an action plan, evaluation of that action plan and answers to potential questions Council might have received from residents and traders about the proposed development.

Yet, despite Council's effort to manage the opposition residents still opposed the project. The public notification period and Council's assessment of the submissions, led to Council's decision to defer its decision on the transferral of land. The decision would be deferred until a comprehensive examination was undertaken assessing the residents' concerns and how they might be addressed. The following was recorded in the minutes of a June 2008 Strategy and Policy Review Committee:

> … until a firm plan of the proposed community housing project is approved demonstrating to the satisfaction of Council that the proposed development can occur while allowing for satisfactory local traffic circulation and that other

concerns of local residents have been investigated and discussed in full (CPP 2008b, p.2).

Due in part to a complex statutory planning process and the cash in-lieu scheme that the Council was honouring, some residents saw the Council as being 'deliberately obstructive and obfuscating' (according to a local politician). Many feared that the Council had pre-determined the decision because of the statutory obligations to sell the land first, and as politicians noted later 'residents would not distinguish between a policy and philosophical support for social housing'. Some residents feared that a process was set in place that would ultimately result in an outcome to satisfy Council's motivation to build more affordable housing.

In light of the opposition, the Council made the decision in June 2008 to reverse the process and to seek submissions responding to the development application first in advance of the sale of land (Table 10).

Table 10: Statutory process to develop the site

Steps in the process	Date	Statutory process	Outcomes
Preliminary consultation meeting	July 2008	Planning permit	Review draft plans for Kyme Place rooming house.
Public notification period	October 2008	Planning permit	As per the statutory requirements (same as above).
Submissions received	October 2008	Planning permit	Forty objections. Objections led to Council requested that PPHA revise their plans to respond to concerns raised.
Revised plans lodged	February 2009	Planning permit	Revised plans lodged. Individual notices sent to 192 residents surrounding the site and two signs erected on site (CPP 2009, p.40).
Submissions		Planning permit	Fifty-two objections received (CPP 2009, p.41)
Independent Panel decision (Notice of Decision)	April 2009	Planning permit	This meeting was open to the public to verbal submissions in support of written submissions.
Appealed to VCAT	September 2009	Planning permit	Decision was made to issue a planning permit.
Planning permit	September 2009	Planning permit	Planning permit issued.
Public notification period	February 2010	Land transfer	Public notification period as per the Local Government Act 1989.
Submissions		Land transfer	Thirteen submissions received in opposition to the proposal.
Council meeting	April 2010	Land transfer	Six people spoke in support of the submissions. The decision was made by Council to proceed with the transfer of land (CPP 2009, p.1).

Source: Unpublished material including minutes from statutory meetings.

While the Council felt that the proposal aligned with its policy direction, namely to support socio-economically disadvantaged residents to remain in the area (see Community Plan 2007–17), they felt that the proposal still had planning issues that needed to be resolved. Furthermore, because the Council was the land owner, and is the planning authority, the decision was recorded in the June 2008 Council minutes that Council's objectivity of the proposal could be clouded and so the decision was made to place the planning decision in the hands of an independent committee which was set up specifically to assess the Kyme Place proposal (CPP 2008b, p.2).

The committee that assessed the Kyme Place proposal was established under section 86 of the Local Environment Act 1989, which is a delegated authority that would decide on the planning permit. The committee would consist of one City of Port Phillip politician, two community members and two paid independent planning experts and these individuals cannot have made a submission to the Kyme Place sale/land transfer (CPP 2008d). The committee was called the Port Melbourne Affordable Housing Project Planning Assessment Panel (the Panel). The Panel's duties included the following:

→ To exercise all Council's powers, duties and functions under the Planning and Environment Act 1987 in accordance with relevant policies and guidelines of the Council and to do all things necessary of convenient to be done for or in connection with the performance of those powers, duties and functions.

→ To consider whether external independent assessment report or reports should be commissioned relating to the assessment of the planning application, and to request council officers to commission independent assessment report or reports up to the value of $20 000. (CPP 2008d)

The Council minutes recorded that while the section 86 Committee was not necessary to make a determination on the proposal, it was felt by Council that to gain confidence from residents, that an independent authority was necessary (CPP 2008b, p.10). The outcome of the June 2008 Strategy and Policy Review Committee was to issue the planning permit before the process to determine the transfer of land was undertaken.

In October 2008 another period of public notification and a call for submissions was made in response to the proposed development. A total of 40 objections were lodged, which led Council to request a redesign of the development proposal to reflect the concerns, namely scale of the development, loss of surveillance into the car park, and the inadequate space allowed for cars to maneuver into and out of the car park (CPP website, n.d.a).

The Council issued a 'Notice of Decision' to grant a planning permit in April 2009. The planning permit was finally granted by the Victorian Civil and Administrative Tribunal (VCAT) in September 2009, which found that there would be little use of the car park by the tenants of the dwelling and thus parking requirements for the development were waived (CPP 2010b, p.6). The transfer of land was approved one year later in April 2010. The final decision to transfer the land was made on the basis that: the site would provide community housing tenants access to transport, shops and services; the project would be developed and managed by PPHA; PPHA is committed to giving priority to local residents; and the project is consistent with local planning policy framework (CPP 2010b, p.9).

Because the opposition to the land transfer and indeed the proposed development was so strong, the statutory processes were then re-arranged. What we uncovered in our research however, is that the opposition to social housing in Port Melbourne was not a sentiment shared by all of its residents. The following section examines the

debate that waged in the Port Melbourne community about the proposed land transfer and development at Kyme Place.

5.2.2 A community in disagreement

Despite attempts to engage community members, opposition to the Kyme Place affordable housing proposal continued and so did debate about what constituted appropriate development. The *Emerald Hill Weekly*, a newspaper distributed in eight suburbs across Port Phillip, provided a forum for resident debate on the proposed development in 2008. A selection of the letters published in the Emerald Hill Weekly is discussed in this section which illustrates the division amongst residents and traders. One camp framed their opposition in the context of planning issues, while the other claimed that these planning issues were simply being used by objectors to mask concerns about future tenants. The discussion was prompted by a piece written by a local resident who stated his support for the proposal and accused those in opposition to the project to be unwelcoming of diversity:

> A taste of diversity
>
> Opponents of the Liardet Street [Kyme Place] rooming house, led by the proprietors of the organic food shop in the area, seem to be saying they are in favor of real food, but not real people.
>
> They want to be part of Port Melbourne without accepting the social and economic heritage that has made the community what it is. Port [Melbourne] has always been an ethnically and economically diverse community …. (Turnbull 2008)

This provoked retaliation by another local resident who came to the defence of the opposition mounting against the Kyme Place development. In the quotation below, a local resident states that the intent of the opposition was to articulate an unhappiness towards the Council for a planning process which this resident (and others) believed lacked transparency and time to consider and assess the proposed project's impacts:

> House of cards could fall
>
> I object to Noel Turnbull's smug insult (EHW May 20–27) that those opposing Port Phillip Council's plans for Liardet Street [Kyme Place] are opposed to public housing. But following the indignity of council planning its economic development proposal for Liardet Street [Kyme Place] in secret for nine months and the injustice of it then rushing it through its own planning process, Mr. Turnbull's ill-informed sanctimony is a minor irritant …. (Glover 2008)

A second article appeared days later responding to the first article which antagonised opponents. Similar to the quotation above, this resident also came to the defense of the opponents by stating that Council's attempt to transfer land into private ownership was misguided:

> Nourishing diversity
>
> Thanks for publishing Noel Turnbull's ill-informed and naïve letter (EHW, May 21–27). As one of the proprietors of the organic food shop and a member of the newly formed Port Melbourne Alliance, I can say we are all for real food, real people and an ethnically and economically diverse municipality. What we do not abide is the City of Port Phillip's attempt to remove another public asset and transfer it into the ownership of a private entity—the Port Phillip Housing Association Limited.

Why are we losing more public open space and car parking? Noel, let's make it harder to do business, diminish our economic foundations and see what happens to community diversity then. (Hall 2008)

It would appear to be the case based upon the two quotations above that Council was failing to effectively communicate to residents that the car park would still remain mostly intact and in public ownership. Nonetheless, criticisms directed towards the land transfer were made. However, this did not prevent supportive residents from weighing in to offer their support for the development and for the Council's efforts to build more affordable housing.

Credit to the council

I am impressed by the affordable housing units achieved by Port Phillip Council—especially those built into redundant heritage buildings ….

Councillors are committed to increasing affordable housing and do this by using council assets/property as a basis. In Kyme Place, other properties are being sold to finance the units, and the loss of car places is minimal. So despite protestations from Leigh Glover (EHW, May 28–June 3), it seems a case of saying people on low income are not welcome. Retaining our great diversity is an admirable council aim and should be a commitment from every resident. (Grainger 2008)

One of the last articles to appear in the *Emerald Hill Weekly* in 2008 in support of the Kyme Place land transfer and development went so far as to compare the opposition that was mounting to NIMBYism:

Critics laughed off stage

Unchain St Kilda's assumptions that the Port Melbourne Alliance is not against social housing, merely against the Liardet Street [Kyme Place] plan reminds me of a Barry Humphries joke. One of Humphries' alter egos, Sir Les I think, opined that: 'Commission housing is all right in its place; just not next to my place'. (Lewis 2008)

The views expressed in these letters highlight an important issue: objectors claim that their concerns are about planning issues (parking, scale, over development), but critics of those objectors argue that these planning issues are simply being used to mask underlying opposition to the future tenants. When the development being opposed is an affordable housing development, residents in opposition are at risk of being labelled as discriminatory. This is perhaps why many resident submission letters analysed for this research (see below) preface their objections with sentences such as: 'while I'm in favour of social housing …'

Earlier we discussed the significance of council policy as a foundation to support elected officials in their backing for affordable housing. What we are seeing in the debate above is residents likewise providing support for these developments and engaging in debate about their importance. Opponents of the opposition are also questioning the basis upon which that opposition stands and therefore calling for a more detailed examination of why such a project is deemed unacceptable. In the case of Kyme Place, local residents are being called to account by other residents.

5.2.3 Mobilising opposition to Kyme Place

Many factors can contribute to opposition gaining momentum. In the case of the Kyme Place development, the siting of the development between two zones—a residential and commercial zone—presented the unique opportunity for residents and local traders to align their efforts to oppose the proposed development. Residents were

able to access the resources available to a shop keeper, notably the unfettered access to a large number of people (who can sign a petition when they purchase a coffee), a canvass to broadcast opposition (a store window) and material items to allow the message to travel (takeout coffee cups). As a representative from a local housing organisation (2) told us:

> The bakery located next door to the property; undertook to advocate against the development; by labeling the paper bags (sold with the baked goods), with a sticker stating 'Do you know council intends to turn Kyme Place into public Housing,' and providing the Local Members contact details to voice disagreement.

Messages were also sent to patrons of the shops urging residents to email their local councillor or State Member to communicate their opposition to the project. In particular the shop keepers wrote messages on take away coffee mugs that said 'Oppose Kyme Place'. Email was also used to exchange messages and spread misinformation about the future tenants fuelling the opposition further. When asked to reflect upon the strategies used by the shop keeper in particular, the local State MP commented that as a strategy the messages were effective. He recalled receiving thousands of emails and many phone calls which led him to say to us in the interview that it was probably the best method of getting your message across that he's seen in five years. However, rather than concede and give the opponents the political traction they were seeking, the MP used those calls to reiterate his support for affordable housing and point to the strong policy framework that articulates support for an inclusive and diverse community.

The resources available to the shop keepers helped attract opposition from residents living in other parts of Port Melbourne, creating a much larger opposition campaign that the local MP would have to contend with. Although the immediate concern about the development came from close neighbours, momentum was established across the broader community and this was reflected in the number of submissions recorded (see below). Another aspect that contributed to the opposition gaining momentum was the timing of the statutory processes and decision-making in line with the 2008 local government election. Although substantive information could not be found to support this claim, interviewees stated in no uncertain terms that the atmosphere around the election was highly-charged and that the Kyme Place proposal was indeed a central election issue as several candidates stood on platforms against it. Although this created fuel for the opposition, these individuals did not get elected and that momentum was subsequently lost.

5.2.4 Kyme Place today

The opposition that was mounted by local residents and traders led to the City of Port Phillip deferring the land transfer decision until a firm development plan was approved. Doing so allowed additional studies around traffic and car parking, waste management and urban design to be undertaken, the result of which led council to request a revised proposal that responded to concerns, namely the scale of the proposal, loss of surveillance, and access into and out of the car park and laneway (CPP 2009). The proponents responded by changing the width of the laneway, repositioning the lift, height reduction of the front pergola and revisions to the east elevation.

Throughout the multi-faceted statutory planning process, the main concern expressed by local residents and traders was the loss of car parking. At the time when the land transfer and planning permit were being sought, it was known that there would be a loss of eleven car park spaces, however, as mentioned above, the Council believed

that they took reasonable efforts to make up for these lost spaces by creating two parking spots in front of the development and 10 spaces along the main street. Kyme Place was completed in June 2012 as a three storey dwelling containing 27 independent living units (five one-bedroom units and 22 studio apartments)—four less than initially proposed, with 22 car spaces, 11 less than what was contained in the original car park (Figure 9). One year on since its opening residents and passers-by have come to regard the dwelling as the 'the tree house' because of its unique architectural style and use of timber material (Clark 2013).

Figure 9: Photograph of PPHA's Kyme Place affordable housing project

5.3   Opposition to affordable housing

The Kyme Place development saw a total of 143 submissions made by residents and traders over the course of the two statutory processes. We could access 56 of these submissions and analysed them for their themes (Table 11).

Table 11: Residents' concerns as expressed in formal submissions to the City of Port Phillip Council regarding Kyme Place

Issue of concern raised by submitter (I oppose the development proposal because of the potential impact on …)	Percentage of submissions raised (from total of 56)
Parking/traffic	89%
Physical inappropriateness / overdevelopment	38%
Crime and safety	36%
Amenity for neighbours	34%
Low-income of future residents	16%
'Out of Character'	13%
Planning assessment process not legitimate	9%
Antisocial behaviour	7%
Own property de-valued	5%
Environmental / infrastructure issues (flooding, sewerage etc.)	2%
Property management	2%
Transiency of future residents	2%

Source: Submissions data obtained from the City of Port Phillip Council

The concern that was most often expressed in the submissions was parking and traffic followed by physical form. Concerns about the tenants were not as frequent. However, in discussions with interviewees, it was suggested to us that the actual makeup of concerns about the proposal was quite different to that presented through submissions. For instance one local politician stated the following:

> For Kyme Place, two-thirds of the opposition was about the nature of the likely tenants around which there was a great nervousness and apprehension. Probably a third of the opposition focused on loss of parking. The issue of density didn't really come up so strongly, even though now that it is built this has come to the forefront of people's minds ….

Analysis of submissions data was also undertaken for eight other affordable housing development proposals in the City of Port Phillip. Although we analysed a lesser number of submissions in the City of Port Phillip than we did in Parramatta (267 compared with 401), we found that the average number of submissions received for each individual proposal was higher in Port Phillip than in Parramatta. In part this could reflect a higher number of these projects having been subject to mandatory public notification, whereas in Parramatta a large number of affordable housing projects included in the analysis had been subject to fast-tracked planning assessment under the SHI. In total, submissions against nine development applications were examined in the City of Port Phillip. Table 12 lists the locations of each project as well as the year the project was completed and the number of submissions received for each, while Table 13 shows the breakdown of concerns for all nine projects overall.

Table 12: Number of submissions received against affordable housing proposals in the City of Port Phillip

	Suburb	Year Completed	Submissions
Princes Street	Port Melbourne	2005	4
Marlborough Street	Balaclava	2006	33
Ormond Street	Elwood	2007	7
Enfield Street	St Kilda	2008	48
Barkley Street	St Kilda	2008	16
Blessington Street	St Kilda	2011	0*
Kyme Place	Port Melbourne	2012	56
Vale Street	St Kilda	2012	69
Chapel Street	St Kilda	2012	34
Total			267

*Funded through SHI

Source: Submissions data obtained from the City of Port Phillip Council

Table 13: Concerns raised in formal submissions made against affordable housing proposals in the City of Port Phillip

Issue of concern raised by submitter (I oppose the development proposal because of the potential impact on …)	Percentage of submissions raised (from total of 267)
Parking/traffic	84%
'Out of Character'	55%
Physical inappropriateness / overdevelopment	50%
Amenity for neighbours	31%
Environmental / infrastructure issues (flooding, sewerage etc.)	19%
Antisocial behavior	19%
Crime and safety	13%
Planning assessment process not legitimate	9%
Concentration	8%
Low income of future residents	7%
Own property de-valued	6%
Property management	3%
Transiency of future residents	3%

Source: Submissions data obtained from the City of Port Phillip Council

In addition to the 267 submissions made against the nine projects shown in Table 12, several of these projects also received multiple letters of support. In one particularly contentious project, a total of 76 signed support letters were lodged. Based on these signed letters of support and the letters to the newspaper presented earlier, it appears that not all proposals for affordable housing will result in outright opposition in Port Phillip. Rather, community opinion is divided. The construction of affordable housing generates passionate responses and these come from a number of different perspectives beyond a simple 'for or against' dichotomy. The 'grey' area might comprise those concerns not directly related to the proposal in question (e.g. the scale of this development is too high), to concerns that might be related to a distrust of local planning process, a fear of people who are different from themselves or a concern that change will result in more antisocial behaviour.

Nevertheless, where community members do oppose a project, often the planning system is one mechanism used in an effort to prevent it from being built. In some cases, planning language is used to veil concerns about the future tenants. Drawing upon our analysis of nine development applications in Port Phillip and interviews with policy-makers, the following sections describe some of the reasons residents of Port Phillip have opposed projects. The focus is on objections based on concerns about affordable housing and tenants.

5.3.1 Concerns about social housing

While planning concerns (e.g. parking, traffic and overdevelopment) were the most common concerns raised across the 267 submissions we examined, several of the submissions contained emotionally charged comments about affordable housing and the negative impacts it was believed it could have on an area. The most prominent concern expressed was that affordable housing would attract antisocial behavior and

increase crime. The following quotations were taken from our analysis of submissions data.

> Community housing usually brings with it unemployed people who have little regard for other people's needs. And therefore many of these such tenants make more noise at all hours of the night as they have no daily commitments …. Community housing also increases crime in the area and considering St Kilda is already a high crime area, it will only serve to encourage these people further.

> I oppose the construction of a rooming house at this location. Having a rooming house for vagrants so close to the [kindergarten and park] is unacceptable. With the drug epidemic in our society, I have huge concerns that a rooming house will attract drug users and we will have to clean [the park] of syringes before allowing our children to play there. I also don't want homeless people wandering around our street, as I feel it makes our street unsafe for myself and my young children.

> Port Melbourne already hosts an unacceptably high level of public housing and suffered the consequences of the inevitable associated high crime rates and antisocial behaviour. We cannot tolerate more.

Note that a rooming house is essentially the same as a boarding house (see footnote on p.49). Another issue raised in many submissions is the concern that an affordable housing project will have a negative impact on property prices in the neighbourhood. Some submitters indicated that they would be forced to sell their home to avoid losing money when their property values fall as a result of affordable housing development:

> For your information, if this application goes ahead we and many other residents will be selling our properties …. This alone makes us feel disgusted that we will have to do this in order not to lose money on our apartments, for which we paid a substantial amount of our hard earned cash for ….

Residents are stakeholders in a neighbourhood and for some residents that stake is further entrenched when they invest in a home. As an officer from the SHA commented, homes are often people's major asset and they fear any devaluation:

> People have a huge stake; usually the most that people are ever going to invest is in their homes and in their properties, so people perceive that public housing will reduce the value of their properties.

Underlying these concerns about affordable housing residents and property values is a lack of understanding of what constitutes affordable housing. Many public housing tower blocks still exist in inner Melbourne and the presence of these buildings was seen by interviewees to reinforce negative perceptions of affordable housing as being poorly designed and poorly maintained, and housing people with criminal and antisocial behaviours. As an officer from the SHA stated:

> In Melbourne in particular, people still see the towers, because they're very dominant on the landscape, they were built in the 1960s and 1970s, that they still have a view that public housing is going to look like that.

Where objections are made to a proposed affordable housing project on the basis of the characteristics and/or behaviours of future residents, this is not grounds for a proposal to be rejected or amended. Although the pressure that a powerful opposition campaign can place on planners and politicians can sometimes have a bearing on development outcomes, objectors are usually in a better position to influence development outcomes where they engage planners in a dialogue about the planning

and design merit of a proposal. Given this, there are many strategies that local government and housing providers have developed and employed to specifically address resident concerns about affordable housing development. These will be discussed later in this chapter.

5.3.2 Planning objections

Port Phillip is one of the most well connected parts of Melbourne by public transport and the Council continues to commit to reducing residents and local workers' car dependency. Recent proposed changes to the City of Port Phillip parking policy reflects this commitment by reducing the car parking ratio for resident land uses 'In locations with access to fixed rail public transport, close to local shopping (full line supermarket/s) and subject to on-street parking restrictions' (CPP 2007, p.2). Yet despite a policy commitment to reduce car use, parking provision remains a prominent concern and will often form the basis upon which a resident will lodge an objection. In the case of the Kyme Place development discussed above, car parking was a highly valued commodity, as one local politician stated:

> People really, really, really loved the car park.

The view that car parking is the primary concern for residents was echoed by one housing provider we interviewed who said that the main criticism they receive for their developments is about parking:

> Council may be supportive of having reduced car park numbers, but it's often, the first—sometimes the only—criticism that gets leveled at us by objectors; if we're proposing developments with reduced car numbers and no visitor car parking; it gets attacked immediately. Even though this city itself is trying to get away from a car-culture, it's difficult. There's this residual resistance to change. So that's the loudest and the consistent criticism of our developments, that we've got reduced car parking, and what the impact will be.

If opposition persists and the issue gains traction housing organisations might be required to undertake a more extensive review. Reflecting upon an affordable housing development in another area within metropolitan Melbourne, a representative from another NFP housing organisation was able to share how they used a comprehensive parking and traffic study undertaken on affordable housing car parking demands in inner city Melbourne to win a case at VCAT:

> A key document at VCAT was the extensive parking/ traffic report that was done, which helped us to win the case at VCAT. There was extensive research done on car ownership within the social housing sector. We are required to support a parking/traffic report when a development does not deliver the required number of spaces. The opposition triggered a more extensive review.

Commissioning such studies is one way that councils can support community housing organisations in their efforts to obtain development approvals for their projects. Given that parking is the most widely cited concern (as we found above), parking may sometimes be used as a way of opposing affordable housing (Cook et al. 2012b). Through the planning appeals process, opposition made on 'non-planning' grounds (e.g. concerns about the future tenants) will be dismissed. Therefore, residents rely on their use of more 'legitimate' planning issues to form the basis of an objection. In our analysis of resident opposition in Port Phillip, we saw several opponents preface their objection to the project by explicitly stating that they are ideologically not opposed to social housing:

Let me say at the outset that I support community housing in St Kilda. However, I remain of the view … that the proposed development, which appears to be five storeys, is too large.

And some tenants take outright offence to the suggestion that their planning concerns are masking a concern about future tenants:

The project's proponents have painted those of us who are directly affected collectively as 'conservative' and 'rich' newcomers who are totally opposed to public housing. This is not the case. We were offended/ saddened/ angered by the campaigns run against us in the local media and by the local state representative.

Despite the fact that residents may be offended by accusations that planning concerns simply mask non-planning issues, the perception by those who are making policy and responding to resident submissions is that the underlying issue, whether it is explicitly stated or not, is the future tenants of the project. For instance, one Victorian Government officer involved in affordable housing projects delivered under the SHI shared the following:

There was a mix of issues that people raised but usually there was some underlying concern, significant concern about the potential tenants … there were some really quite ugly accusations about those tenants.

According to a local MP in Port Phillip, cloaking concerns about tenants in planning issues was evident in the projects he was involved with:

Whilst people never use the language, they almost always get upset saying 'we don't want these people'. Usually it's parking and design which start the conversation but it usually ends up being about property values and we don't want these people to affect property values. This is despite the fact that these people are already their neighbours.

Herein lies a conundrum for planners, policy-makers and politicians who are required to make a decision (or support a decision) to approve a development proposal. Opposition is not always black and white (if you can show that parking is being adequately addressed, opposition will stop); rather there is a grey area that is occupied by a range of different opinions about affordable housing.

In Port Phillip and other parts of Melbourne, as with our Parramatta and Queensland cases, interviewees felt that there were certain types of areas where opposition to affordable housing was most likely, especially where residents were wealthy and empowered. In one affluent inner Melbourne suburb, extraordinary measures were taken by both the opponents and the council planners to ameliorate concerns about SHI development. As one SHA representative stated:

They, very effectively, lobbied the local member who was in a marginal seat so although she was allied with the then ALP, in fact she was an ALP member. They lobbied her to say that they didn't like the fast tracking through the Planning Minister and they wanted proper community consultation. That's been their thing all along that they want to be consulted. So with that particular project, we were instructed to initiate a form of community consultation which was actually handled by a third party. So we sought input, we displayed the plans and sought input from the community. All of that was then assessed and, as a result of the community input, the plans were significantly amended, so a whole storey was chopped off, a lower number of units were approved and then it was resubmitted back to the Department of [Planning] and then subsequently to the Minister for Planning. Those changes, I would have to say,

didn't really result in any less protests from the community. So it was a very empowered community and they've continued to—when I say the community, a very small number of voices, so one or two protestors have continued to write in to lobby the result.

Resident opposition can vary based on residents' ability to leverage resources. Geographically, this ability may be concentrated in more affluent suburbs, like the one referred to above. A more 'sophisticated' (Stein 1996; Iglesias 2002) objector might emerge in these locations. One housing organisation stated that if the objections go as far as VCAT, the developer has to seek legal representation.

For every objection or criticism that is put to us, we have to provide a response, often resulting in the appointment of a full legal team to address the objections, or issues that are raised. In another development proposal, we had a VCAT appeal submission claiming that our development proposal constituted a 'human rights violation,' and the objectors engaged a barrister to defend this position. As a result we had to engage legal representatives to provide a counter to this argument.

Often these processes result in significant losses for the housing organisation and sometimes result in significant delays in project delivery. Therefore there is an incentive for the housing organisation to seek strategies that will manage or even ameliorate concerns before they arise. In the following section we examine the strategies government and housing organisations employ to address these concerns.

5.4   Adopting new strategies

Resident opposition has the ability to inflict negative consequences upon a range of different stakeholders. When a proposal goes to VCAT, the housing organisation has to seek legal counsel resulting in rather high legal costs which, especially for a small housing organisation, can be financially costly. For the local council that wants to provide affordable housing to their lower income residents, opposition can delay and in some instances even prevent proposed developments from being built. For their residents in need of shelter, opposition can deny these residents of a home. To overcome or at least manage resident opposition to proposed social housing to avoid these negative impacts from being realised, housing organisations and councils in Victoria have adopted engagement techniques to respond to opposition or avert it.

The City of Port Phillip has a reputation of being consultative with residents and some of their good practices were articulated in a 2009 report, which was commissioned by the City of Port Phillip and undertaken by Mandy Press titled *Community engagement and community housing: Lessons and practical strategies for Local Government for responding to contested community proposals*. This report provides broad recommendations to councils on how to reconcile competing community interests. In many ways, this section of the present study builds on Press's work. However, in contrast to Press (2009), the research presented here is supported by semi-structured interviews with affordable housing organisations, local and State government planners, and local and State politicians who under a unique policy context (SHI), shared the strategies they used to address resident concerns. Some of the paragraphs below reflect specifically upon Kyme Place. However, many interviewees chose to also reflect on other, sometimes more controversial projects proposed elsewhere in Melbourne in their discussions with us. This section is divided into two sections: (1) addressing potential opposition before it happens; and (2) managing opposition when it arises.

5.4.1 Addressing potential opposition before it happens

There is a history of high-rise public housing development in inner-city Melbourne, including parts of Port Phillip. Port Melbourne was once an area that contained many high-rise public housing blocks and these apparently serve as a not-so-distant memory for many people objecting to affordable housing today. Of a controversial proposal in Port Melbourne, one council officer stated:

> They thought, oh, this is going to be a typical—they kept saying Housing Commission development. Housing Commission—gee, when did that start? … But they keep referring to the Housing Commission and their memory of what the Housing Commission used to build. Community housing doesn't build like that anymore, doesn't design like that. So people kept thinking that public housing was going to be—community housing was going to be like the Housing Commission, so that's often their reaction, and it's going to be built like Housing Commission or public housing.

Dispelling resident's concerns by providing information to residents that current proposals represent contemporary design specifications of social and community housing is a challenge, but it is one that is necessary given the growing need to build such developments as one SHA officer stated:

> I guess we had to put our energies into those projects but also get some information out there about the quality design, the fact that nowadays public housing and community housing is designed to fit well into the surrounding neighbourhoods and streetscapes, and get out some positive messaging, too, about just the need for affordable housing, affordable rental housing.

Leading the way in overcoming this stigma around social housing are NFP housing organisations in collaboration with government entities who work to inform and educate residents about what affordable housing is. Furthermore, if a proponent is going to seek a development application for a social housing project, addressing potential opposition before the application is lodged requires strategy and tact on the part of the council and the NFP housing organisation. A communications strategy may be important in the first instance to combat any concerns and misconceptions before they turn into opposition.

In preparing for potential opposition to the proposed land transfer at Kyme Place the Council developed a communication and stakeholder relations plan in April 2008. The plan was developed in advance of their meetings with residents about the transfer of land into private hands and formed the basis upon which opposition would be managed. The plan contained information about the project and had the following goals:

→ To engage with key stakeholders on Kyme Place and minimise the objections through the planning process.

→ To promote the council's policy on affordable housing.

→ To manage the issues through the media. (CPP 2008b)

Local councils are not the only tier of government to look to a communications strategy as a way to manage opposition. For those projects subject to the strict timelines associated with the SHI in Victoria, an interview with a former SHA officer involved with the SHI revealed that a communications strategy was put in place which targeted councils and housing organisations (rather than residents):

> We wrote to all of the mayors at the beginning of the project just to say exactly what we were doing. We worked also through the not for profit housing

associations because approximately half of the projects in Victoria were delivered through the housing associations, so they were in some ways the front line in terms of trying to communicate to councils and communities about the benefits of the projects.

Despite the large number of projects funded through SHI, there were relatively few projects that encountered fierce opposition. Interviewees revealed that controversial projects were typically those that were larger in size and were located in areas where there were aspirational home owners. As an officer from the SHA stated:

There were a few, for example, in a greenfield or outer suburban housing estates or even regional housing estates where new home buyers bought houses and subsequently found that maybe two or three units scattered through a new housing estate were bought by [the SHA] for public housing and they were terribly concerned.

For projects developed under usual policy conditions and not subject to SHI restrictions, like Kyme Place, housing organisations are also well positioned to address opposition before it arises. Several housing organisations interviewed for this research discussed their attempts to get support from decision-makers for their projects. Obtaining in-principle support from councils before the formal application is lodged allows the housing organisation to build a body of support for their proposal. In some cases the housing organisations can be highly successful in achieving council support. While the elected officials may not be able to support the actual planning permit application as such, they can support the values behind it. Support from elected officials is essential as it offers the advantage of preventing opposition from gaining political traction.

In addition to in-principle support, NFP housing organisations will take local politicians on tours of former developments to showcase the quality of the final product. By bringing the politicians on board, NFP housing organisations can share the burden of addressing the opposition if it arises. If there is a local politician that supports the project and the selection of the location, it may have a greater chance of being successful at the planning stage. Rather than discuss if the project should be built in the first instance, politicians can focus on details of the proposal which is a more positive encounter and focuses on getting the most out of proposed projects.

A housing organisation can also demonstrate their commitment to the tenants they house and the neighbourhoods they build in by maintaining a reputation of strong management practice. In doing so, they are able to build a positive reputation in the community as one NFP housing organisation representative shared.

I think just doing it, by being good neighbours and good operators—we have developed a good reputation. We use professional consultants, our designs win awards, we are responsive. We're here in our local community, so we're changing it from the ground up. I don't think being a hero or waving the flag is necessary. You bring about change slowly, through reputation and building up a base and respect.

The same housing organisation shared their response to the idea that residents fear that once the development is complete the housing organisation will move on and not manage the dwelling:

'You're not going to be around?' Well actually we are. If it was a commercial development, you'd have 27 different real estate agents and you wouldn't know who was causing the problem in a property. With us, just make one phone call and we'll sort it out. We have established that confidence and

respect through the way we manage our properties and through the quality of the development. If we just threw up an ugly box, people would be right to say you're not responsive to your community; you're not enhancing our community. We spend money and time and resources in getting quality outcomes and the people who live there respect it and appreciate it.

People want to know that if there is a problem, there will be a number they can call. Alleviating residents' fear of poor design and management requires open channels of communication which allow housing organisations and the authority granting approval to inform surrounding residents of the development being proposed.

A relatively more controversial way to reduce opposition at the early stages of the process is to reduce any opportunities for residents to formally object. This was the strategy that was adopted under the SHI and for one housing organisation, this was an extremely effective method.

> If it hadn't been for the [SHI] process … that was really the most effective technique on that project, independent of any strategies we put in place. Without the [SHI] fast tracking process the project could have been held up in planning for years. The [SHI] process was of great value to us given the tight timeframes that were imposed.

If a formal process of community notification and public process is removed, the onus is left with the housing organisations and council to use the strategies discussed in this section to avoid delays in project delivery. But NFP housing organisations will only embrace these measures if they think it is in their best interest to do so, as another NFP housing organisation representative declared:

> If we know there's a particularly sensitive issue or community concern that could become problematic, we can focus on that area or engage with the relevant parties but the focus in planning applications is the development and as developers we need to work within set processes and abide by the statutory requirements.

At the moment, NFP housing organisations will work within the regulatory framework set out in the statutory process and meet current standards regarding consulting the community. This commitment to going through the statutory process was stated by another NFP housing organisation representative:

> We don't want to go out and wave the banner, do us a favour, its community housing, it doesn't get traction from critics. We concentrate on the merits of the development. We work within statutory guidelines; we meet the objectives of ResCode. We've had professional, award-winning consultants assist us to achieve quality developments. Measure us on that.

Housing organisations are developers and it is their job to follow due process. If that process is taken away the onus is on the housing organisation to engage the community on a particular development. As developers have an interest in sustaining their commercial viability, efforts might not always extend beyond that basic function.

5.4.2 Managing opposition when it arises

Opposition sometimes arises when the development application has been lodged and the formal statutory process commences. Housing organisations will try to prevent opposition from escalating by adopting strategies to address resident concerns. A common strategy employed by government and some housing organisations, as this SHA officer stated, is door-knocking immediate neighbours and using media and

flyers to get positive information to residents to appease concerns and minimise objections:

> I think the other thing is really just at the local level, to be able to put a face to the department and to the people that will be moving in. So the sort of thing that we've done quite a lot, and in terms of some of the contested projects, is to doorknock in the immediate neighbourhood. Not necessarily to doorknock hundreds of people but immediate neighbours, people that may be affected, and actually put a human face to either the housing association or the Department and potentially, when the project's launched, have people in for cups of tea so that they can actually meet the tenants. Otherwise, it's kind of an amorphous mass of people that they fear …. I guess getting proactive messaging out there as well, so looking at what people are claiming and just through the media and other forums just getting very clear about what is being proposed, how the housing is going to be managed, what it was going to look like, how it may or may not affect property prices, those sorts of things.

Housing organisations have used door knocking and letter dropping to communicate with surrounding residents. These approaches are used to inform residents about the proposals and how the project may affect them. The information will usually include a description of what is being proposed and why it is necessary. However, one representative from a NFP housing organisation noted that by door knocking before the development is advertised this potentially alarms residents of potential problems and therefore generating concerns amongst residents that might not have been there otherwise:

> If you go around and door knock everyone, then it's—in some ways it can be counter-productive because you're drawing attention to things that aren't relevant. A commercial developer wouldn't go and door knock and say, 'is it okay if we did this?' or draw attention to the future occupants. In these circumstances we want to be considered as a developer and the planning application be assessed on its own merits. The community housing is almost incidental when it comes to planning. That's one approach.

Even when the development is likely to be approved, the residents may demand that they have a say as to the kinds of tenants that will live in the dwelling. As one NFP housing organisation representative stated:

> We are here to house low-income Australians, that is our mandate. The main aspect they will talk about is the fact that they are low income and can't afford other types of accommodation. We focus on what we are legally able to say and highly respect the privacy of the people concerned. We would never tell the community that the people that will be housed have a mental health issue, etc. There is Privacy Legislation that they adhere to. Residents can comment on the project design but not on the people it will house.

NFP housing organisations know that it is their reputation of providing well designed and well managed accommodation that will help them when opposition flares around a proposed development. They also know that one of the fears residents convey is that the development will bring unwanted people into the neighbourhood. To ameliorate these concerns, some housing organisations seek to house existing low-income residents in an area. It was suggested by a local member that if a housing provider can demonstrate that they are housing local residents, opposition to the tenants will potentially become a non-issue.

> The tenant community that you initially populate with is important. If you can get some good community leader-types from the start that helps a lot.

Regarding Kyme Place there was a bloke who has been in Port Melbourne his entire life and he volunteers to take elderly people around to their appointments, walking their pets, etc. Everyone knows him and so he is their model tenant. He was the public face. If you criticise him you criticise [the organisation he volunteers for] and no one is going to do that. Another example is Father Bob—A development on former church land, he was housed in the development. If you criticise Father Bob, you criticise the Father Bob Foundation.

Creating a 'community champion' as a strategy helps to ameliorate concerns that the development will bring unwanted people into an area. Instead it helps to make the point that the dwellings will house those already living in the area. The affordable housing developer or council reduces opposition that might gain momentum based on concerns about the tenants and returns the focus to 'planning issues'.

5.5   Reflections on the Port Phillip case study

The City of Port Phillip has undergone significant gentrification in recent decades resulting in an increasingly affluent community. Even within this context, the Council continues to support affordable housing through a policy framework that values inclusiveness and diversity. The example of Kyme Place presented in this chapter illustrates a struggle in Port Phillip, as in many other gentrifying areas, between maintaining affordability for lower-income residents and attracting potential home buyers who want to invest in a location that will generate a return on their investment. Retaining affordable housing requires vigilance on the part of City of Port Phillip politicians. One of the Council's assets here is the extensive policy framework that states explicitly its support for a more affordable place for all to live, through the Council's plan, housing strategy and Community Plan. The presence of these plans helps depoliticise any opposition that might result in the abandonment of projects. According to interviewees, at the last council election, all successful candidates were supportive of affordable housing.

However, opposition to affordable housing is a real concern for NFP housing organisations. Because these developers often have fewer resources to offset delays resulting from opposition, they have developed specific strategies to manage or even reduce the amount of opposition their projects encountered to help reduce delays in construction. A NFP housing developer that is committed to informing the community of developments and possibly even working with community members to finalise designs can build trust. A relationship with the community may begin through discussions with residents before lodging the application or after. Doing so will help the developer establish a presence in the neighbourhood.

Under the SHI, resident notification and third party appeal rights were removed in favour of fast-tracking social housing development. While a social good was delivered, it flew in the face of consultative processes which residents had grown accustomed to. Yet, despite the speed at which housing was provided and the lack of resident engagement, the SHI and the process it adopted was praised by affordable housing developers as a mechanism to avoid drawn out opposition campaigns. Those projects that were delivered under the SHI and subject to its strict restrictions around delivery did not result in formal opposition, as was the case with the Blessington project (one of the nine projects we examined). Under standard planning processes, NFP housing organisations often seek in-principle support from elected officials and planners to build a foundation of support before the project is lodged formally. What is essential in this process is articulating how a proposed project fits within the values structure and priorities of the council.

If a housing organisation takes additional efforts—beyond the statutory process—to notify residents of their development and to discuss any concerns residents might have, there is a risk that this will actually result in *more* opposition. However, the importance attached to up-front resident engagement in the literature (Iglesias 2002; McClymont & O'Hare 2008; Gibson 2005; Feldman & Turner 2010) also suggests that it is a recognised tool to manage opposition. In addition, research suggests that engagement, when it is done in a genuine manner, can deliver beneficial outcomes (Legacy 2010). This includes resident acceptance of the outcome and the fostering of relationships between residents and the housing provider (Galster et al. 2003). However, our research revealed a concern held by some NFP housing organisations that by informing residents of the proposal and indeed giving them an opportunity to object, residents will exercise that right with often damaging consequences for the NFP housing organisation and the prospective tenants themselves. That is why for some NFP housing organisations interviewed for this research, the SHI was heavily praised as a valuable delivery mechanism for affordable housing.

When opposition does set in, a wealthy and educated community like Port Melbourne's can leverage resources to their benefit. In the case of Kyme Place that was the resource offered through access to local traders who objected to the proposed development. The opposition started with a local ringleader, in this case the café owner, who resided in the immediate vicinity of the development. Momentum and traction can be built by residents when they employ innovative strategies to spread their message. The research in Port Phillip also demonstrates that opposition to affordable housing is not uniform and that opposition to the opposition can arise. In Port Melbourne there was strong community opposition to Kyme Place, but we also saw individuals argue in favour of affordable housing development. This argument was played out in opinion articles to a local newspaper. The result of this was a dialogue amongst residents about affordable housing and the extent to which the concerns of objectors were indeed about the type of residents it would attract or about the quality and appropriateness of the design. While the planning system is designed to separate prejudice from planning concerns, it would appear that residents themselves can also serve to reinforce a value system that sometimes is left to elected officials and policy documents to defend.

6   MITCHELTON AND CAIRNS, QUEENSLAND

In Queensland, we were unable to identify specific council areas that had become a focus for community opposition to affordable housing development in quite the same way that Parramatta and Port Phillip have. However, we did identify large numbers of individual affordable housing projects that had been controversial when they were originally proposed, across the State and especially in Brisbane. The approach we took to the empirical research in Queensland was therefore slightly different to that in NSW and Victoria. Instead of looking at whole council areas as case studies, we focused specifically on two projects where the opposition had been particularly vocal and well-organised, and where affordable housing developers had ultimately agreed to make significant amendments to their original proposals, in order to satisfy the concerns of community members. The two case study projects from Queensland are in the middle-ring Brisbane suburb of Mitchelton and the master-planned estate of Bluewater Harbour, in Cairns. The Mitchelton case study was developed by a NFP housing provider, while the Cairns project was developed as part of the SHI. In both cases, community activists were able to gain political traction and achieve high-profile media coverage of their opposition campaigns.

The chapter is broken down into three sections. The outbreak, escalation and outcomes of community opposition to affordable housing in Mitchelton and Bluewater are reported in the first and second sections respectively, mainly based on media reports and interviews with community activists and affordable housing developers. The third section then reflects more generally on the findings from Queensland, particularly with respect to levels of community involvement in the planning and development process. The chapter is based on interviews with fifteen representatives from State and local government planning and housing departments, politics, NFP housing organisations and community activist groups. Eleven people were interviewed face-to-face and four were interviewed by telephone. Members of the research team visited Mitchelton but the research budget could not support a trip to Cairns.

6.1   Mitchelton, Brisbane

6.1.1 Mitchelton

Mitchelton is located around 8 kilometres northwest of Brisbane's CBD (Figure 10). Originally settled in the 19th century, the suburb covers an area of around 4 square kilometres and had a population of just over 8000 in 2011 (ABS 2011). Overall, its residents were slightly younger than Queenslanders or Australians as a whole in 2011, and almost 80 per cent had been born in Australia. The next most common countries of birth were England, New Zealand and the United States. A higher proportion of Michelton's resident population had a tertiary or university degree than for Queensland or Australia, and unemployment rates were lower. The median weekly personal income in Mitchelton in 2011 was $732, far higher than the equivalent figures for Queensland and Australia ($587 and $577 respectively). Most of Mitchelton is dominated by one and two storey freestanding dwellings, although there is a commercial strip along Blackwood Street and a 50 000 square metre shopping mall to the north-eastern extent of the suburb.

In 2007, NFP housing organisation Brisbane Housing Company (BHC) acquired a 0.2 hectare site towards the southern end of Blackwood Street, in central Mitchelton. Blackwood Street is a traditional neighbourhood-scale commercial strip comprising a mix of mostly convenience and food stores, cafes and restaurants, banks, offices and community services (Figure 11). The BHC site had a 40-metre street frontage and was located around 250 metres south of Mitchelton railway station. It was vacant at

the time, with an extant planning approval for mixed-use commercial and residential development. Deciding that this existing proposal with planning approval did not match their requirements, BHC subsequently lodged a new development application with Brisbane City Council (BCC) for a four storey project comprising ground floor retail and 51 affordable housing units on the upper three storeys. In this application, provision was made for 12 parking spaces for residents and 21 spaces for retail parking. The decision was made by BHC to limit the height of the building to four storeys, in order that the development application would be 'code-assessable', rather than 'impact-assessable'. In Queensland, local council planning authorities can identify certain types of development that are code-assessable for a site, with other types of development then being impact-assessable. The main difference between these two levels of assessment is that code-assessable development applications are not publicly notified, whereas impact-assessable applications are. Because the development proposal on the Blackwood Street site was deemed code-assessable by BCC, there was no requirement for public notification.

Figure 10: Map showing the location of the suburb of Mitchelton within the Brisbane City Council Local Government Area (LGA)

Figure 11: View of Blackwood Street commercial strip in 2012, looking north. In the distance, a train can be seen crossing the street at a level crossing

6.1.2 Community opposition to affordable housing development in Mitchelton

Although there was no formal requirement for public notification, BHC held some community consultation meetings in Mitchelton around the time that the development application for the Blackwood Street project was lodged with BCC. Community members were invited to talk to BHC staff and to comment on plans and schematic drawings of the proposed development, and there was a video that showcased existing BHC residents, their homes and stories. Despite these efforts, however, the first that some community members knew of BHC's proposal was when a notice went up at the site, announcing that construction was to begin. According to interviewees, at these early stages there was some concern from members of the local Chamber of Commerce and nearby residents about the development, many of whom felt there was too little information available on what form development would take. A handful of people from the community gathered to discuss the proposal and to make a plan of action. It was decided by them that, in their terms, they would *fight* the development, and a group known as the Mitchelton Action Group (MAG) was established in an attempt to give community members a unified and more powerful voice.

Using MAG's informal networks, the group was able to assemble more detailed information on the BHC development. Interviewees from MAG told us that the main concerns that members had originally had with the BHC development proposal were to do with proposed levels of parking provision at the project. MAG members from the local Chamber of Commerce were concerned that the parking provision proposed was insufficient, despite this figure being set on the basis of figures from a survey of parking requirements at comparable BHC projects.[4] They explained to us that access to convenient parking for customers is the most important consideration for small businesses. MAG members felt that residents would not be able to park their cars at the project, and would inevitably park on the street as a result, making it more difficult for patrons of local businesses to park and do their shopping. Some members of MAG also believed that the BHC development provided too little amenity for residents, particularly as there was no communal space to be provided at the project.

At an early stage of the opposition to the BHC project, MAG members undertook some of their own research on other affordable housing developments in Brisbane, visiting projects and asking residents about their experiences living there. Following the relaying of certain negative findings from this research to community members in Mitchelton, MAG members recalled that people had become increasingly concerned that the 51 affordable housing units proposed on the Blackwood Street site was too many for one property, and that the concentration of that many low-income residents would create problems with crime and antisocial behaviour. According to community member interviewees, these concerns were apparently exacerbated by earlier experiences where groups of youths had loitered outside local businesses on Blackwood Street. In a 2010 radio interview where he reflected on the concerns that community members had expressed about the BHC proposal, the Chairman of MAG was quoted as saying:

> This is a real problem with social housing at the moment, in that the government or company that's doing it put a whole range of people into these buildings—they might be single mums, they might be pensioners, but they could also be ex-convicts, they could be recovering drug addicts, they could be alcoholics and consequently the mix —it can be quite a violent mix that's ready to explode at any time … (ABC Brisbane, 2 February, 2010)

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[4] This car-parking study had been undertaken by BHC specifically to determine the ratios of car ownership across the 1000 unit portfolio.

MAG stepped up their opposition to the Blackwood Street proposal. More local residents and businesses were informed about the development through the Chamber of Commerce networks, pamphlets and letter box drops, a petition was arranged and local and State politicians were lobbied, with MAG members meeting the relevant State Minister at one stage and the opposition gaining regular newspaper, radio and television coverage. As one MAG member recounted, the group had even taken on a stall at the monthly Mitchelton farmers market and had carried coffins up and down Blackwood Street to symbolise the damage that they believed the BHC project would do to local businesses:

> We had people handing out pamphlets, we had stalls, we carried a coffin up and down [Blackwood Street] … with dirge music, saying: 'this [affordable housing development] is going to kill Mitchelton.

In the early stages of the opposition, two rallies were staged in local venues. According to interviewees, these attracted 150 and 350 people respectively, sometimes including local politicians and senior BHC staff. Representatives of MAG told us that at each of these meetings, a motion to continue the group's opposition to the BHC proposal were passed unanimously, which they believed gave MAG legitimacy as a representative of the community. The local Labor politician in power at the time was an advocate of the affordable housing proposal and was said by interviewees to have spoken in support of the development at the MAG meeting, apparently to booing from the crowd. She was quoted in a newspaper article at the time as saying that the people opposing the Blackwood Street project were a 'vocal minority', and that:

> There are a great number of people coming forward who share my aims for the suburb and are strongly supportive of the (development). (Brisbane Times, 10 October, 2007)

In the same article, in late 2007, the Mayor of Brisbane at the time, Campbell Newman, also came out in defence of the BHC development proposal, saying of the Mitchelton objections that:

> It is a little bit sad when at a time where there is an affordability crisis that people are reacting in this way.

And that:

> This [BHC proposal] is not public housing, this is good quality, well-designed affordable housing for people who really need a home. (Brisbane Times, 10 October, 2007)

Reacting to some views apparently expressed in the media that opponents of the Blackwood Street project were principally concerned about who would be living at the affordable housing project, the Chairman of MAG rubbished those claims and criticised BHC's consultation process:

> Statements in The Courier-Mail attributed to [BHC staff] that, 'people have made statements that [residents of the affordable housing] are all going to be drug addicts and unemployed' are utter rubbish. Because BHC was so tardy in their lack of community consultation and secretive in their actions, of course grave concerns for this complex were held by some—but never that 'all residents would be drug addicts and unemployed.' (Courier Mail, 18 October, 2007)

It is important to reiterate that, being a code-assessable application, no public notification was required of BHC or BCC for the Blackwood Street proposal. However,

some community consultation meetings had nevertheless been staged by BHC prior to the development application being lodged. Despite this, views similar to the above quote were expressed by community members interviewed as part of this study. They believed that fear and anger in the community about the Blackwood Street proposal had been greatly exacerbated by a lack of information available on the proposal and by the dismissive attitudes of a local politician towards the concerns that had been raised. One interviewee claimed that the Blackwood Street proposal had initially been treated by some proponents as if it were a 'done deal', which had angered them further:

> It was all a done deal, basically, and you sort of do get your back up when you're told—'you can't do anything about it, it's a done deal'.

The opposition to the Blackwood Street project continued through late 2007 and began to gain political traction in the build-up to local elections in Brisbane in March 2008. The Labor councillor who had advocated for the development proposal at the MAG public meeting was due to retire at the 2008 elections, with new candidates from the Liberal Party and Labour Party to contest the seat of Enoggera ward. The timing of the opposition in a period when both these candidates were canvassing for votes was seen by MAG members to have greatly benefitted their opposition campaign. As a prominent MAG member recalled:

> … the big meeting we had initially was at the church hall. And we made sure that councillors and any candidates that might be standing were in attendance. But we were very fortunate that the [Liberal Party] wanted to win this seat, and it was just before an election. … So we went political on it if you like and we sort of tried to get both parties and both candidates for the council to commit to supporting us ….

The same interviewee recalled that the impending election had also brought an about-face by the Liberal Lord Mayor of Brisbane in early 2008. Having defended BHC and the Blackwood Street project in late 2007, newspaper articles in early 2008 reported that Mayor Newman was now critical of BHC's consultation process at Mitchelton. BCC is a key shareholder in BHC and has been a financial contributor. In the media, Mayor Newman was said to have threatened to cut BCC's funding for BHC if the concerns of the Mitchelton community were not addressed. Liberal candidate for Enoggera Andrew Wines is quoted as having said:

> The Lord Mayor and [his] team prides themselves on community consultation and the BHC has made a mockery of that …. We are putting this [threat to cut funding] on the table and now it's up to the BHC to make their decision …. If they do not resubmit a new proposal which takes into account what residents want, that's when we will look to follow through [on cutting the funds]. (North-West News, 4 March, 2008)

By this time, however, BHC and MAG had already been engaged in regular face-to-face meetings about the Blackwood Street development proposal for several months, which seems to us to suggest that the opposition in Mitchelton was simply being politicised in March 2008, in the build-up to the local election. In any case, regular face-to-face discussions between BHC staff and MAG members had begun shortly after MAG held its first community meetings in late 2007. A senior representative from BHC had met formally with three prominent members of MAG on many occasions throughout late 2007 and early 2008. The brief for this BHC liaison was to negotiate with MAG and to find a mutually-acceptable way forward for the development; they were to talk to MAG about the group's concerns and aspirations for the Blackwood Street site and to relay this information directly back to the CEO.

Although the atmosphere in these small-group discussions was initially quite strained, the meetings became increasingly constructive over time. It transpired that there were a series of amendments that could be made to the Blackwood Street proposal that would make it acceptable to MAG; increased parking provision and more commercial space, reduced numbers of affordable housing units, an on-site manager for the affordable housing units, the provision of communal space for affordable housing residents, minor changes to building design and servicing, the establishment of a community-liaison group and a commitment that the residents housed at the project would be aged 55 or over. These changes were negotiated between BHC and MAG, and a series of agreed amendments were subsequently made to the plans for the project. This agreement between BHC and MAG was made informally through a series of letters and a handshake, rather than through any legally-binding contract.

Although the height and bulk of the Blackwood Street proposal was to remain largely unchanged, parking provision would be increased from a total of 33 spaces (12 for residents and 21 for retail) in the original proposal to 51 spaces (24 for residents and 27 for retail), meaning that a multi-level parking facility would be required. Instead of housing 51 affordable housing units on the upper three floors, the project would now comprise commercial space on the first floor, 16 affordable housing units on the second floor and 15 market units on the third floor. That is, it would now be a mixed-tenure and mixed-use project incorporating retail, commercial and residential uses, with the number of affordable housing units reduced from 51 to 16. As agreed with MAG, the 16 affordable housing units would also be available only to people aged 55 or over. An open-air communal space for the affordable housing residents was also added to the project and provision was made for a resident on-site manager.

The Blackwood Street development was completed in 2010, with construction having commenced in August 2009, nearly two years after the original application had been lodged. Members of MAG that opposed the development in its original form told us that the revised project has had a positive impact on the street and that there have been no problems with the residents of the affordable housing units. Interviewees revealed to us that people who had originally opposed the development of the project now socialise on a regular basis with its residents. We were also told by objectors that the new retail and commercial space that the project provides on its ground and first floors has strengthened the Blackwood Street commercial strip overall. As one community member told us, this has been a key selling point of the project:

> I think people sort of say—'oh there was a lot of controversy then but now it's not so bad' … if it was just a residential block I think people would still resent it, but the fact that they see new shops and facilities, and there's a diverse range of things that happen there [makes it more acceptable].

On a visit to the project itself, as part of a different study, the research team spoke informally to residents of the affordable housing units who were happy with their accommodation and had experienced no hostility from community members in Mitchelton. They were particularly fond of the communal space that was incorporated in the amendments made to the project design following input from MAG. We also found that although there had initially been strained relations between MAG members and BHC staff, the small-group face-to-face meetings between a BHC liaison and prominent MAG members had engendered amicable relations between them and an atmosphere in which ongoing discussions and negotiations could take place.

6.1.3 Reflections on Mitchelton

A two-year delay from the lodgement of an application to the commencement of construction generates significant holding costs for an affordable housing provider

working within tight budgetary constraints, as does the type of project re-configuration that occurred in Mitchelton. The addition of commercial space and market apartments to the Blackwood Street project also increased the financial risk for BHC. All in all, the drawn out and agonistic development process in Mitchelton required the investment of significant time, money and effort by all of the groups involved, especially BHC, and it was indicated to us that it had also led to the Mitchelton community acquiring a reputation as one of the most militant in Brisbane. Some interviewees even suggested that developers had been turned away from the area as a result:

> A lot of developers sort of balk at the idea of coming in [to Mitchelton] as well …. Because developers just don't want the fight so they'll take their money elsewhere.

Members of MAG made it clear to us that they were not against development, *per se*; indeed many of the key people involved in the opposition to the BHC project were small business owners who understood the need for development. This outcome was therefore not expected by them.

It could reasonably be argued that some of the views expressed by community members in opposition to the Blackwood Street development resulted in an improved project. Specifically, the addition of communal space seems to be working well and evidence from overseas suggests that developments of purely low-income housing can generate negative externalities once they reach the scale of 50 units or more (Galster et al. 2002), although these externalities may not necessarily be linked to the residents of those projects themselves. More recently, BHC's model had been to develop mixed-tenure projects in which the sale of market housing subsidises the provision of affordable housing. While there are 35 fewer affordable housing units at the Blackwood Street project than there were planned in the original proposal, our view is that a mix of tenures would generally be preferable in a project of this scale. Experiences so far and interviewee testimonies suggest that the BHC Blackwood Street project has been a resounding success.

Members of MAG told us that the opposition would not have escalated as it did if they had been genuinely consulted and listened to in the early stages of the opposition. Although BHC did run community consultation sessions to discuss the Blackwood street proposals, it seemed to us that the absence of any formal public notification process had helped generate fear in the Mitchelton community in the initial stages of the opposition and made it easier for MAG members to sway community feeling through the negative accounts that they gathered of experiences in other affordable housing projects in Brisbane. There remained a feeling for some community members that if BHC had shown more willingness to take on-board community concerns at an early stage, the Mitchelton community would have been far less hostile towards them. As one MAG member put it:

> When [the developers] do talk to you, they've got to talk and say 'this is our initial plan, what do you think?' … we're not idiots—we don't [say] 'oh no, we don't want anything—go away'. We will allow [development], we understand that. So give us our credit and we'll give you yours, you know—listen to each other, negotiate.

Perhaps one of the most important lessons to take from the Mitchelton case though is about the potential for relations between opponents and proponents of an affordable housing development to be improved through regular face-to-face meetings in small groups. Over time, the BHC community liaison was able to build up a strong working relationship with MAG and a mutually-acceptable way of delivering the Blackwood Street project was found. It seems likely that this positive outcome would not have

been possible without these small-group meetings. Whereas public meetings and exchanges made through the media in the case of Mitchelton appeared to increase animosity between BHC staff and members of MAG, these small-group face-to-face meetings seemed to do the reverse.

There is no doubt that the opponents of the Blackwood Street project were well-organised, well-resourced, and extremely effective in obtaining support from politicians and getting their message out through the media. Their campaign was also aided by the timing of the early stages of the opposition around the 2008 local election and their resolve was strengthened by a sense that their concerns were simply being dismissed by some development proponents. The delays and amendments to the Blackwood Street project were costly for BHC, and the yield of affordable housing units was considerably reduced from the original proposal. However, the substitution of a single tenure affordable housing project with a mixed-tenure project comprising additional communal space for affordable housing residents could also be seen to represent a positive outcome overall; it could well be argued that community activism in Mitchelton may have ultimately contributed to changes being made that improved the project. What was beyond doubt for all interviewees was that the development outcomes in Mitchelton have been extremely positive for the area overall.

6.2 Cairns

6.2.1 Bluewater Estate, Trinity Park

Bluewater is a master-planned estate located around 17 kilometres north of central Cairns, in Far North Queensland (Figure 12). It forms part of the suburb of Trinity Park and has its own marina fronting a man-made canal created in the early 2000s. Lying less than 1 kilometre southwest of the coast, the estate opens out onto the canal and is served by a single road connection. The Bluewater Estate was described by interviewees as being an 'exclusive' residential address, comprising many 'multi-million dollar' properties. The population of the Trinity Park suburb, which includes the Bluewater Estate, was 2459 in 2011 (ABS 2011). The median age of residents was 33, compared with 36 and 37 in Queensland and Australia respectively. Seventy per cent of Trinity Park residents had been born in Australia, with England and New Zealand the next most common countries of birth. Median personal weekly incomes were $669, considerably higher than the $587 median for Queensland and $577 for Australia as a whole.

Late in 2009 or early in 2010, one of the lots that remained for sale and undeveloped at the Bluewater Estate was offered by the owner/developer to the SHA, as a possible site for affordable housing development funded through the SHI. Having worked with this particular developer on several other SHI projects and subject to due diligence, the SHA agreed to purchase the land, with the developer contracted to provide a nineteen unit affordable housing project on the site, to the SHA's specifications. This development was to comprise a total of five two-storey buildings accessed primarily by an internal driveway, along with nineteen parking spaces.

Figure 12: Map showing location of Trinity Park in relation to Cairns CBD and Cairns Local Government Area (LGA)

In Queensland, public housing has, for many years, been exempt development under State planning legislation. The CEO with administrative responsibility for the Housing Act 2003 determines, subject to the requirements of the Sustainable Planning Act 2009, whether a proposed public housing development proceeds or not. The SHA's proposal at Bluewater was deemed by its staff to be 'not substantially inconsistent' with local planning controls and by officers at Cairns Regional Council to be 'substantially consistent' with local planning controls, albeit that the council did identify the proposed level of parking provision as contravening planning requirements (Cairns Regional Council 2010). This meant that no formal public notification was required for the development. As community members became aware of the proposals through word of mouth rather than through any formal engagement process, however, many became concerned about the potential impact that the project might have on the local area and raised questions about the appropriateness of the location and the legitimacy of the development approval process.

6.2.2 Community opposition to affordable housing at Bluewater Harbour, Cairns

As awareness of the proposed affordable housing project at Bluewater Harbour grew among local community members, the first formal response by residents was to arrange a community meeting to discuss the proposed development and the appropriate course of action for them, if any. At this meeting a vote was taken on whether the community should oppose the project formally in a united front, with this vote apparently returning a verdict in favour of an opposition campaign. As a prominent community leader recounted in an interview:

> I called a community meeting, and there's about 500 people that live here in the [Bluewater] estate. I called a community meeting, which we had almost 100 per cent turnout to. I spoke, I had several members of Parliament speaking as well—from the opposition [Liberal-National Party] … and it was done by a democratic vote—did people in here want to oppose this project or

not, with a show of hands … I didn't want to fight a battle on my own …. They did want it [and] I became their quasi-leader.

Subsequently, a group was established to orchestrate the Bluewater community's opposition to the proposed affordable housing development. The group was named Concerned Citizens of Bluewater (CCforB) and its activities were to be organised through a committee comprising eight community members. This committee met regularly and provided frequent updates on the campaign to residents through newsletters, website postings, phone calls and community meetings. The CCforB group was also itself incorporated and a total of almost $36 000 was raised in resident donations in order to fight the proposed development, in court if necessary.

Members of CCforB initially had concerns relating both to the proposed project and to the development process. In the former respect, many local residents felt that development would harm property values in Bluewater. As one interviewee explained:

The type of properties that are in here are multi-million dollar homes, it costs a lot of money to live here and people were very worried about the diminishing values of their own properties should this complex go ahead.

Property values were a particular concern for many CCforB members because the proposed development was located at the gateway to the Bluewater Harbour. Residents were also angry because it had apparently been suggested previously by the developer of the estate that the particular lot in question would be a location for new luxury apartments. As one community activist recalled:

The problem that my community had, and continues to have, is that that block [where the affordable housing is located] is an entrance statement block. Everyone that bought in this canal estate was told that there were eight luxury units to be built there. In fact the sign with the artists' impression of the 8 luxury units remained on that block for three months after the Government had bought it. And people continued to buy land in here … under the impression that private, luxury penthouse units were going to be built there.

In addition to concerns that the affordable housing development might negatively impact the value of their properties, members of CCforB believed that the Bluewater estate was not an appropriate location for affordable housing residents because it was poorly served by shops and public transport. Although the site of the proposed development was within a couple of kilometres of a school, community centre and leisure centre, the nearest supermarket was 5 kilometres away, public transport was limited and there were just a few shops locally. For some CCforB members, these factors made the area an inappropriate location for affordable housing.

On top of concerns about the potential impact of the proposed project and the appropriateness of its location, members of CCforB believed that the process for developing the housing at Bluewater was flawed. They suggested that it made no sense for the State Government to acquire land in such an expensive location for affordable housing development, and that the figure being paid to the developer for the completed project was far higher than it should have been, based on quotes that CCforB had obtained themselves from other builders for the same type of building in that location. On this point, some interviewees even felt that the developer had been given preferential treatment by the SHA because of a pre-existing relationship between them. The research team had no way of confirming or refuting this. However, a key point made repeatedly by CCforB regarding land and development costs was that the development of affordable housing at Bluewater, and the SHI program more generally, represented a wasteful use of scarce government resources.

Also regarding the development process, the lack of consultation by the SHA was seen by community members to have contributed to the Bluewater community's hostility towards the proposal. An interviewee from CCforB described the approach taken by the SHA as 'very secretive' and recalled the frustration that community members had felt at not being listened to in the early stages of the opposition and then being labelled as racist and elitist when they continued to object:

> [The affordable housing project] was just going to go ahead, come hell or high water. Whether local people wanted it or not. So, we felt that not only were we not heard, the research and the arguments that we were putting forward were very valid arguments. In order to justify their position the State Government painted us as racist, elitist—any sort of label that they could throw on us, all to really justify what was unjustifiable.

In the early stages of the opposition, CCforB attempted to voice their concerns to representatives of the council, as well as to State and Federal Members of Parliament. However, a CCforB representative explained that as they failed to gain any traction with these groups, they had then taken to protesting instead:

> We held a number of public rallies, protests, demonstrations … very successfully, after we had made approaches to the local members here [in Cairns], the council, then the state members and federal members without any success of having anybody wanting to sit down and listen to our concerns. So we took to protesting.

CCforB were able to achieve widespread media coverage and gain significant political traction through their protests. An early tactic was to arrange a petition and present it to the local State MP, with this move gaining local media coverage. The Cairns Post reported the objections of local community members to the proposed affordable housing under the headline 'Bluewater residents fear public housing', saying that:

> The residents have concerns about the possible devaluation of their homes and the negative stigma attached to public housing. [CCforB] committee members have told The Cairns Post they were concerned about potential fights and alcohol consumption by people living in the public housing and said it was not appropriate for an estate labelled as one of Cairns' premier addresses. (Cairns Post, 12 February, 2010)

The stance taken by the CCforB was immediately attacked by affordable housing advocates, with a report in the Cairns Post labelling them 'NIMBYs'. In an article with the headline 'Bluewater NIMBYs disappoint advocates', a representative from a State housing advocacy group stated of the CCforB's opposition that:

> These comments [by the Bluewater community] reflect a prejudice and NIMBYism that will not stand up to scrutiny (Cairns Post, 17 February, 2010)

The debate was similarly polarised in comments posted by readers of the Cairns Post, with issues of entitlement, belonging, work ethic, economics and race raised and debated. In subsequent months it was reported in the same newspaper that Bluewater residents had stepped up their 'fight' against the proposed affordable housing project, with spokespeople for CCforB criticising the assessment process for SHI projects and claiming that the project did not meet local planning requirements. Relating to this point, members of CCforB had obtained a copy of a letter from the Mayor of Cairns to the Minister for Housing, in which the Mayor requested that alternative locations were sought for the affordable housing proposal at Bluewater Harbour. A rally was staged by the CCforB at Bluewater Harbour at which the Queensland Opposition leader, John-Paul Langbroek, and two local politicians spoke out against the affordable

housing proposal, with Langbroek citing a 'lack of consultation', 'secrecy' and 'poor planning' as the basis for his opposition (Cairns Post, 18 March, 2010).

Much of the Bluewater community's anger at this rally seemed to be directed at Prime Minister Rudd, with protestors displaying banners proclaiming that the Federal Government's SHI was removing people's rights and wasting taxpayer money. A month later, Rudd visited Cairns to make a funding announcement for a medical centre and was heckled by protesters who were angry about proposed affordable housing projects in Bluewater and other parts of Cairns (ABC Far North Queensland, 2010). According to a member of CCforB, Rudd was delayed for two hours in Cairns as the protesters '*held him hostage*', with this story making national news as a result (The Australian, 8 April 2010). A member of CCforB recalled:

> Kevin Rudd … came to Cairns and our group—and there's no other way to describe it, but held him hostage at the Cairns Base Hospital for two hours. He couldn't leave, such were the numbers of people that we had there. And we were demanding a face-to-face meeting with him. In the end he refused to meet with us … but in the end he sent his Chief of Staff out and we met with [the Chief of Staff] … and because of that we were mentioned at the National Press Gallery.

About a week before, the Queensland Government's Housing Minister and the Director General of the SHA had visited Cairns to meet with a deputation of CCforB members, along with residents from two other areas of Cairns where SHI proposals had been opposed. At this meeting, members of CCforB had presented the Minister and Director General with information suggesting the site of the proposed affordable housing project at Bluewater had been identified as the location for a new road in a court order issued when the estate was initially developed. This information had been gathered by a private investigator hired by CCforB with the funds raised by residents. A representative from the SHA recalled the meeting and subsequent research by SHA staff that suggested that the information was not completely accurate:

> [at the meeting] … the [CCforB] objectors made a claim that the original approval for the whole [Bluewater] development required that this particular site be used as a thoroughfare into the general pattern of streets in that part of Cairns and that on the basis of the decision of the Planning Court, nothing could go ahead on this site because it was supposed to be a road. Now that was so left field that [the SHA] had no way of responding to it. You know this is not anything that we know about the site so we … looked into it extensively and that was a furphy. You know there was a Planning Court appeal, there was a requirement that the pattern of the roads inside this development connect more strongly to the pattern of Cairns streets, but there was another place that that occurred.

We were subsequently told by interviewees that although the new road through the development site had originally been a condition of planning approval for the estate, this particular requirement had been successfully appealed by the developer at an earlier date.

It also reached the media that there was debate within the SHA about whether Bluewater was the best location for new affordable housing. However, the Housing Minister was said by interviewees to have taken a strong line that it was a suitable location and that the proposed development should therefore proceed as planned. The abandonment of the project would have resulted in major financial costs to the SHA because the contract with the developer would not have been honoured.

About one month after the meeting between CCforB, the Housing Minister and Director General of the SHA, workers arrived at Bluewater Harbour to begin the construction of the controversial affordable housing project (Cairns Post, 27 April, 2010). The Cairns Post reported that the local police, expecting an escalation of the protests, had earlier briefed community activists and had told them what they could and could not do, legally. Following some vandalism of the site before construction commenced, it was also reported by the Cairns Post that security cameras had been installed. This was seen by some Bluewater residents as an invasion of their privacy, and one was fined by police shortly afterwards for honking their car horn in protest (Cairns Post, 28 April, 2010). This action by police was, in turn, criticised by CCforB and Liberal-National Federal candidate, Warren Entsch, who was quoted as saying of the fine issued to the horn honking resident:

> Obviously, the State Government minister has primed her on-site minions and the police to go hard on any public dissent in the area …. Such heavy-handed and gross responses are beyond the pale and smack of Stalinist-type reaction to legitimate public concerns about a grossly-mismanaged undertaking …. What next for concerned residents? Is it a one-way trip to the gulag? It would appear that's the direction these political clowns are heading. (Cairns Post, 28 April, 2010)

At around this time, the SHA appointed a dedicated staff member to act as a single point of contact for anyone wishing to express their views on the affordable housing project at Bluewater, along with another controversial project slightly further north, in Palm Cove. Although the CCforB protests did continue into late 2010, the group also accepted earlier than this that the project was going to proceed whether they liked it or not. After failing to obtain a legal injunction to prevent construction proceeding on the affordable housing project, it became clear to CCforB members that they simply could not afford to pursue legal action indefinitely. At this point, it was decided that the best outcome that CCforB could hope for was to negotiate with the SHA for amendments to the proposed project. As a CCforB committee member explained:

> … it became fairly obvious, not too far down the track, that we either had to have a bottomless pit of money to stop this [development], or we could accept that it was going to go ahead and try and work with [the SHA] to get the best outcome on that block that would best—aesthetically—complement the rest of the estate. Which is ultimately what we chose to do.

Interviewees explained that CCforB were able to negotiate for significant changes to the proposed project through their discussions with the SHA's dedicated contact:

> We were able to get concessions for our complex here that no one else in Australia has got. Our public housing complex here is the only housing complex in Australia that has a full-time dedicated gardener, we were able to have inputs into the colour schemes, we insisted that things like window treatments were put in—they were all uniform. Because we didn't want some people sticking up curtains, someone else putting sheets at the windows, someone else putting newspaper there and so on, as can happen. There were lots of little things we had input into—the type of landscaping, the screening from the street. So we tried to work in partnership with the SHA when it became obvious that [the development] was just a fait-accompli. I suppose what we tried to do was make the best of a bad situation.

In addition to these changes, the SHA were extremely careful about which tenants were given the opportunity to live in the new Bluewater project once it was complete. Rather than simply taking the highest priority clients at the top of their register of need,

a decision was made by SHA staff to create a highly mixed demographic at the Bluewater project (meaning in this case that there was a spread of employed people, single parents, elderly residents, people with physical or intellectual disabilities, and those with alcohol or mental health issues) and a guarantee was made to CCforB by SHA staff that residents of the project would be 'earning or learning'. Once the project was complete and ready for occupation, interviewees from the SHA explained to us that it was made explicit to all of the residents moving into the project that they were fortunate and that ' … *the [SHA] would have low tolerance for misbehaviour*'.

The Bluewater Harbour project has now been complete and occupied for two years, with SHA staff suggesting to us that there have been almost no problems with residents reported in that time. One representative of the SHA recalled that a local resident who had originally been opposed to the development had since written to the SHA's local area office to withdraw their objection. Despite this change of heart for at least one resident and the changes that were made to the project in light of the views expressed by local community members, however, a prominent member of CCforB told us that many locals still did not accept the project and never would:

> That [affordable housing] complex to this day, will never be welcome here. No matter who they put in there. Because of what it represents. Every day, we have to drive past it to come in and out of our estate, and it represents greed, corruption, inappropriateness, the failure of government to consult … it represents everything that we were fighting against … in our faces every day, it will never be welcome. And it's not about the individuals that live there, as [the SHA] tried to portray that that was our issue. It really isn't, it's about the waste and the greed. When you buy as government does, when you buy very expensive pieces of land, build exorbitantly costly buildings and then get little to sometimes no return on them, why wouldn't that make a community of taxpayers angry?

This notwithstanding, the same interviewee did speak positively of the relationship between CCforB and the single SHA contact appointed to work as a liaison with community members, part way through the development process.

6.2.3 Reflections on Bluewater

At Bluewater, a proposal for a 19 unit affordable housing project funded through the SHI encountered fierce, well-organised, well-resourced and high-profile opposition from sections of a wealthy community in which many people felt let down by both the Queensland and Federal Governments, and by the developer/owner of the Bluewater Estate. In their view, the Queensland Government's consultation process had been inadequate and the acquisition of land and development of affordable housing at Bluewater Harbour represented a wasteful use of government resources. They felt let down by the owner/developer of the estate because it had been indicated to them previously that the site would be used for the development of new luxury apartments. This resentment of both government and developer intensified the opposition to what would anyway have been an unpopular development. Perhaps most exasperating of all for opponents of the project was its proposed location at the gateway to the estate.

The concerns raised about the affordable housing proposal at Bluewater generally did not centre (at least explicitly) on the types of people who would live in the project, nor on the physical form of the development. Instead, the focus was on the appropriateness of Bluewater for low-income housing and the potential impact on property values in surrounding areas, the legitimacy of the assessment process for the project and the perceived wastefulness of government.

In terms of the appropriateness of the location, it was argued by opponents that the site of the proposed development was too poorly served by public transport and too far from essential services. There is a bus stop around 450 metres from the development site with roughly half-hourly buses during weekdays to Trinity Beach (10 minutes bus ride) and Cairns (40 minutes bus ride). There are also some local community services and a shopping mall within 5 kilometres of the development site, as well as several small neighbourhood shops within Trinity Park suburb itself. In this sense, the location of the affordable housing was not ideal in terms of access to public transport and services, but its location is better than many other affordable housing developments, at least by these criteria. The question then remains of whether it was appropriate for affordable housing to be built in an area where most of the surrounding properties are occupied by people who are extremely wealthy. Like the type of residents living in a given property and their behaviour, the potential effects of a proposed development on property values is not a planning issue. Given that the proposed development was judged by planners from the SHA and Cairns Regional Council not to be substantially inconsistent with local planning controls, it is difficult to see how it could have been refused planning permission on planning grounds alone.

A question remains about whether Bluewater was the right location for affordable housing. There is some empirical evidence overseas that levels of social interaction between groups of different socio-economic and ethnic background are often limited within a building or neighbourhood, and that individuals with a weaker labour market position may benefit more from middle-income than higher-income neighbours, with the benefits of having affluent neighbours only influential where the 'social distance' between groups is not too extreme (Galster 2012). However, Galster et al. (2003) also show that in areas where properties are uniformly high in value—places like Bluewater Harbour—property values are unlikely to be impacted by the development of an affordable housing development at the scale of that proposed at Bluewater. In Chapter 7, we conduct our own tests to examine the influence (or not) of affordable housing development on neighbouring property values in Brisbane.

We cannot comment on whether or not the development at Bluewater Harbour represented a wasteful use of government resources as we do not have access to the final figures for land and construction costs for the project, nor to alternative figures quoted by other builders. In any case, it is not the intention of the research to evaluate cost-effectiveness in this way. What we can comment on is the assessment process at Bluewater Harbour. Consistent with standard practices for all SHA developments, the proposal at Bluewater Harbour was assessed by SHA staff for its consistency with local planning controls. It was deemed by SHA staff to be 'not substantially inconsistent' with the relevant planning scheme and there was consequently no requirement for public notification. Officers of Cairns Regional Council also determined that the development was not substantially inconsistent with the local planning controls for the site.

Whether a proposed SHA project is 'consistent', 'not substantially inconsistent' or 'substantially inconsistent' with local planning controls is determined by a committee of public servants on advice from professional planners. Where a proposed project is 'consistent' or 'not substantially inconsistent' with local controls, there is no requirement for public notification. Where it is found to be 'substantially inconsistent', however, a formal process of public notification is required. A representative from the SHA explained:

> What happens is [in-house] town planners prepare a submission. That submission goes to what we call the SPA committee. Now a SPA committee is made up of public servants, advised by town planning professionals, as to

whether a project is—well we have three definitions: consistent, not substantially inconsistent [and] substantially inconsistent. On that basis a recommendation is made to the Deputy Director General and then the Deputy Director General does a submission to the Director General. The Deputy Director General doesn't have to take the advice of the committee but I mean the committee is the professionals who are making a judgement on this and then it's up to the Director General. So it's a two-stager …. The first one is to determine whether or not it's substantially inconsistent and if it is it goes to a public notification process.

While the deadlines of the SHI required a rapid turnaround on new affordable housing developments across Queensland and left little room for delays, the assessment process at Bluewater Harbour was said by representatives of the SHA to be no different than it would have been for a project proposed in the periods either before or after the SHI, apart from decision-making and construction taking place within a shorter space of time. While the absence of any formal community notification or engagement is regrettable, there seemed to us to be no evidence that the assessment process differed from standard practices.

Initial concerns for Bluewater Harbour residents about the affordable housing proposal turned to anger and frustration as they failed to gain any traction in their early approaches to local and State politicians. The CCforB group then consciously changed tack and began a campaign of highly-visible protests and rallies that put their message out in the media. This approach was especially effective in cases where the protests targeted high-profile politicians visiting Cairns. The opposition at Bluewater featured frequently in the Cairns Post and made the State and National newspapers at various points, with Cairns protesters even managing to get a face-to-face meeting with the Queensland Housing Minister and Director General of the SHA.

Judging by the comments of a prominent CCforB member, see above, it seems unlikely that community opposition to the development of affordable housing on the estate could ever have been entirely avoided. Yet there is little doubt that the lack of formal consultation in the early stages intensified ill-feeling towards the SHA among certain sections of the Bluewater community, also increasing their suspicion about what would happen on the site. The lack of information on the proposals and the atypical assessment process can also be seen to have made it possible for CCforB to question the legality of the proposal and the fairness of the assessment process. Although such questions did not ultimately force the abandonment or re-location of the project, they did lead to construction delays and made further research by SHA staff on the legality of the proposal necessary. Had such a strong line not been taken by the Director General that the Bluewater development should proceed, such issues may have made the process so challenging that development was no longer pursued. According to interviewees, there was debate among public servants about whether development should have proceeded at all. This internal debate was revealed publicly following a Right of Information request, and was reported in the local press. On this, a representative of the SHA took the view that the SHA could legitimately claim that the project was right to proceed precisely because there was evidence that the decision had been taken only following an internal debate.

Through their protests, CCforB were able to force a negotiation process with the SHA through which they secured significant changes to the proposed project. The SHA agreed to take a considered approach to the selection of tenants and to make certain physical and aesthetic changes to the original proposal that reduced the visual impact of the project. Indeed, the final stages of the opposition, when local community members were liaising with a single SHA contact, were viewed mostly in a positive

light by interviewees from both sides. This raises the question of whether the same development outcomes could have been achieved without the same level of opposition had consultation and negotiation taken place early on. Certainly this would have saved staff time for the SHA and would have meant that negotiations could have begun on more amicable terms (although we recognise that the time and costs of such an engagement process for all code-assessable projects may not be practicable). It may also have been a better outcome for community activists, not just because of the time and money that they would have saved as a result, but because there was a perceived risk among some community members that a high-profile opposition campaign against affordable housing development could lead to Bluewater Harbour becoming associated, in the public mind, with affordable housing. As an interviewee from CCforB explained, a few residents had identified this as a concern at an early stage:

> … there are in fact three builders that do live in [the Bluewater Harbour estate]. And they were very opposed to us shedding any sort of light on this [proposed affordable housing development]. Because they said 'once we become identified as an estate that has that complex at its entrance, who the hell is going to want to build in here?

Viewed in basic terms, the controversial Bluewater Harbour development does not violate local planning controls, except perhaps in levels of parking provision, and it does provide high-quality affordable housing for 19 households in an area where there was previously none. The aesthetics of the project were improved following input from CCforB members and tenancies have been carefully managed by the SHA. Residents have reasonable access to shops, community services and jobs, and were told by the SHA that misbehaviour would not be tolerated. There have so far been no problems reported with tenants. Meanwhile, those residents benefit from living in a much sought-after location, and there would seem to be little animosity between public and private homeowners themselves, with any remaining resentment in the community seemingly directed mostly at government and the owner/developer of the estate.

6.3 Reflections on Mitchelton and Cairns

6.3.1 To notify or not to notify?

The Director-General of the Queensland SHA has, for many years, had the power to determine whether a public housing development proceeds. This meant that, unlike in NSW and Victoria, other than updating the assessment criteria used by the SHA for determining whether a proposal is 'consistent', 'not substantially inconsistent' or 'substantially inconsistent' with local planning controls, no legislative changes were necessary in order for the SHA to deliver new affordable housing to the deadlines of the SHI. Albeit that CCforB did raise concerns around the legitimacy of the SHA's assessment process and the perceived wastage of the SHI, the fact that the SHA's self-approval powers had been in place for many years perhaps meant that there was one less reason for community members to object to the process itself. Certainly, a senior representative from the SHA suggested that most of the SHA's own housing developments in recent years had been uncontroversial. Where proposed projects are not 'substantially inconsistent' with local planning controls, the Director-General has the authority to determine that a public housing development can proceed without public notification. If a project is deemed by the SHA to be substantially inconsistent with local planning controls, however, it must be publicly notified, with any submissions against it taken into account in the assessment process.

Interviewees explained that the SHA's approach to affordable housing development in recent years has generally been to select sites carefully and to build within local

planning controls, so as to negate the need for public notification and reduce the likelihood that proposals will encounter community opposition. As a SHA officer explained with respect to projects developed under the SHI, public notification can delay the development process, especially where there are objections. Far better to ensure projects are not substantially inconsistent with local planning controls:

> … we felt that it was probably risky to be publicly notifying too many because of the completion date requirements. It wasn't particularly difficult to get the appropriately zoned land. That, for us—if it's appropriately zoned, I mean just about everything gets ticked from there …. Town plans tell you where housing can go and the community consultation occurred when the town plan was consulted on. So—that the landlord is the government or a community organisation does not affect the building and we believe that the town planning is about the building, it's not about the tenant. It's not a rhetoric that necessarily resonates with the neighbours, but we can't view it in any other way.

Similar views were expressed by representatives from NFP housing providers:

> I guess as a company … more or less we try and stick to the planning schemes. Because our experience and my experience … is that you're always going to get flak [from local community members]. And if you start going too far out[side] the square it's just going to be a long drawn out process which you might win, which you might not … you could be two, three years caught up in a planning process ….

The status of public housing as exempt development was seen to reduce the time taken to develop housing and was valued by staff members as a result. Because of this, the SHA has been careful about what and where it develops, not wishing the exempt status to be removed as a result of controversy or criticism. A representative of the SHA explained:

> … we've had that legislation [for exempt development] for, you know, 10 or 15 years and have become sensitive to what might stir a community up … having that special power is like having a goose that lays golden eggs and we didn't want to kill it. So historically we have not been particularly heavy-handed [in the SHA's development program].

The majority of the SHA's recently developed projects were said by interviewees to have been 'consistent' or 'not substantially inconsistent' with local planning controls, meaning that public notification had not been required. Even where development proposals had been publicly notified, there had apparently been few submissions:

> I've got to say that the vast majority of projects that we publicly notify have no submissions and of those that have submissions, very few are on a town planning basis because it's only town planning comments [that the SHA takes into consideration]—a comment that oh these people will behave in this way, my land properties will be affected in this way—those aren't things that the Director-General is required to consider under the Act.

In 2012, the SHA analysed of the number of submissions received from community members against all development proposals that had been publicly notified. Since 2007, 700 projects had been assessed under exempt development status through the Integrated Planning Act (1997) and Sustainable Planning Act (2009). One-hundred and forty of these had been determined by the Director General as 'consistent' with local planning controls, 427 as 'not substantially inconsistent' and 133 as 'substantially inconsistent'. Of the 133 projects deemed 'substantially inconsistent' and therefore

publicly notified, 85 per cent had received 10 submissions or fewer (Table 14). Given that the latter make up just 19 per cent of all projects assessed by the SHA since 2007 and that they are the developments deemed least consistent with local planning controls, it is perhaps surprising that the number of submissions received against them is so low: just 19 projects received more than 10 submissions against them.

Table 14: Number of submissions received against 'substantially inconsistent' SHA projects developed 2007–12

	Number of submissions received against project						
	0	**1–10**	**11–20**	**21–50**	**51–100**	**101+**	**Total**
Number of projects	63	51	4	6	5	4	133
Proportion of projects	47%	38%	3%	5%	4%	3%	100%

Source: SHA, unpublished briefing note

In contrast to the SHA's emphasis on limiting the requirements for notification, some NFP affordable housing developers in Queensland described their approach as being about actively engaging community members in project design and encouraging participation. While they too sought to operate within local planning controls as far as possible, often to ensure that a development would be code-assessable, they also pro-actively began dialogue with local residents at an early stage of the design process and simultaneously attempted to educate people about the organisation. An interviewee from a NFP housing provider explained:

> You're damned if you do [pro-actively engage community members] and damned if you don't. But our approach is: look, let's be up front about it and put our cards on the table …. So our approach is to get out in the community and let people know what we're actually up to. And I think it's been really important to get people to know about what … we do, what we don't do … and again how would we manage the development ….

The same interviewee described the standard planning and design process for affordable housing projects. He revealed that because the organisation went into developments with an open-mind and a willingness to make changes to design in the light of discussions with local community members, any issues of concern for those community members had usually already been addressed by the time a development application was actually lodged with planning authorities:

> We put together [an initial proposal]. And then with a unit development, we would actually talk with our immediate adjoining properties and say this is what we're up to, and actually go through it, check some of the concerns. At an early stage, at a schematic stage, we would actually start then designing in some bits and pieces … on the feedback which we received. So when it's time to actually lodge it with council we've already addressed the majority of the issues that neighbours and that might have …."

This approach of pro-actively engaging community members was apparently taken by the organisation because of difficulties that they had experienced in the past with opposition to affordable housing projects. Staff believed that the identification of potential ringleaders in the community was critical to the success of the approach; people who were engaged in civic life and would be likely objectors to a proposal. By pro-actively engaging these people and educating them, this particular organisation had often been able to get them on-side. Not only did putting these people on the inside ensure that they would not object to a development application when it was

lodged, it also meant that they would actively communicate positive messages about the proposal and the organisation to others in the community: their networks and level of engagement in community life could be put to work in support of affordable housing, rather than against it. As a representative of the organisation explained:

> … there's always key people you need to bring on side, even in a residential area. There's always someone that's going to stir the pot. So you need to identify those people early on and you can actually use those people to your benefit. And you can put a bit more work in those people and you can guarantee that [the] information will be spread. So if you can get them on board you've got the battle half won.

6.3.2 How and why do community members in Queensland oppose affordable housing development?

Interviewees from both government and NFP affordable housing developers took a view that there were certain types of locality where opposition to affordable housing development was particularly likely. As well as those living in wealthy, or 'exclusive' areas, community members in 'aspirational' neighbourhoods were seen to be particularly likely to oppose affordable housing development. Asked whether there were certain types of localities where opposition was most likely to be encountered to a development by the SHA, a representative of the SHA responded:

> This is going to sound very cynical too—communities where we believe—we would characterise the community as proud homeowners. Sort of middle middle class … Go into an aspirational area, we get—we do it tough, so we tend to be more conservative in those places. I know how cynical that sounds but we've actually developed a kind of sixth sense. You drive down the street—'oh my goodness we're going to have trouble here'.

This was said to be because:

> … the people [in these areas] are probably doing it tough. They're working very hard to meet their mortgage payments. Someone else is living in a house that's at least as good as theirs—or circumstances at least as good as theirs—and paying almost nothing for it. There's just a sense of injustice. I think that that flows across into [an attitude of] 'well I don't want them here'.

For both wealthy and aspirational neighbourhoods, local opposition to affordable housing development was seen by interviewees to be especially likely where levels of home-ownership were high.

While we were able to access the content of submissions made against affordable housing development in Brisbane (Table 15), we were not able to access the addresses of objectors due to BCC privacy constraints. As such, we could not map the number of submissions received against levels of income and home ownership. Both Mitchelton and Trinity Park are wealthy areas, but we did come across other cases in Queensland where affordable housing projects had been fiercely opposed in areas that were far less wealthy. One interviewee suggested two common themes in areas experiencing fierce opposition to proposed affordable housing developments:

→ A widespread feeling of anger and resentment in the community, usually directed at a government agency or a developer, either prompted by the proposed development or exacerbated by it.

→ A sense that a given area is declining or at the cusp of decline, and that the proposed development might worsen this situation.

This particular interviewee was suggesting that it is most often anger and fear that drive campaigns of local opposition to affordable housing development: anger at being let down and fear about what might happen to the area should development proceed.

At a meeting with planners from BCC, members of the research team requested details of affordable housing developments that had been through the assessment process, and were provided with a list of eleven projects developed since 2006. Using BCC's online planning and development portal, it was possible to access details of the submissions made by members of the public against each of these developments. Because we did not have details of all affordable housing developments developed in this period, it is clearly not an exhaustive list of affordable housing projects. Nor are the range of concerns raised in submissions against these eleven projects necessarily representative of submissions made against all affordable housing projects. Nevertheless, the data provides a useful indication of the types of concerns raised and their regularity (Table 15). In Chapter 8, we compare this submissions data with equivalent datasets gathered for Parramatta (Chapter 4) and Port Phillip (Chapter 5). It is worth noting that the average number of submissions received per project was significantly lower in Brisbane than in Port Phillip.

Table 15: Concerns raised in submissions against affordable housing proposals in Brisbane

Issue of concern raised by submitter (I oppose the development proposal because of the potential impact on …)	Percentage of submissions raised (from total of 59)
Parking/traffic	85%
Physical inappropriateness / overdevelopment	63%
Amenity for neighbours	61%
Crime and safety	42%
Low income of future residents	34%
'Out of Character'	29%
Property management	24%
Planning assessment process not legitimate	22%
Own property de-valued	22%
Environmental/infrastructure issues (flooding, sewerage etc.)	20%
Transiency of future residents	5%
Antisocial behaviour	5%

Source: Submissions data obtained from Brisbane City Council's online planning portal

Parking and traffic were the concerns raised most frequently by opponents of affordable housing in Brisbane. Objections on these grounds typically focussed on the lower levels of parking provision for affordable housing projects, as compared with equivalently sized private projects. NFP housing providers and the SHA typically justify lower levels of parking on the grounds that residents of affordable housing have fewer cars, on average, than private renters and owner occupiers, and that their projects are located in areas with good access to public transport. The parking standards they use are usually based on studies of parking needs in existing projects.

Many objectors questioned the validity of the parking studies that had been used, with another common cause for concern the potential traffic impact of multi-unit developments in areas consisting mostly of single-family homes. Some interviewees

from affordable housing developers suggested, however, that parking was often simply used as grounds for objection because all other features of a development proposal complied with local planning controls. In other words, people would use any reason that they can find to object to an affordable housing proposal and parking is a common one because parking provision in affordable housing projects is often non-compliant with local planning controls. One interviewee recalled a case where a local politician had used grounds of parking provision to oppose a proposed affordable housing project, even though planning officers had been happy with it. This had been purely about the fact that the proposal was for affordable housing:

> … the council officers were fine and they didn't have any problem at all with the reduction of the car parking. But the local councillor did. And I guess again it's this perception that [with affordable housing] you're going to bring into the area all these problems [with tenants]. And that's the only way that they thought they could challenge it … because everything else complied, except the car parking.

Concerns about physical form were usually focussed on the height and bulk of the proposed buildings, along with development densities. Medium rise multi-unit projects were often seen by objectors to be inappropriate and/or potentially damaging to the streetscape. Amenity concerns usually came from immediate neighbours and were usually tied to shadowing, overlooking and noise. Over a third of submissions raised the low-income status of future residents as a concern for them, with this often tied to issues around safety and crime. In some cases this concern focussed on the need for a mix of people in the development, rather than just affordable housing residents, but in others it was purely based on prejudice and came from people who simply did not want to live near affordable housing. As one submitter stated:

> Unfortunately, low cost housing means tenants with the usual behavioural problems—loud 'bomb' cars, noisy stereos, Saturday night fights, drinking, drug abuse, prostitution and generally antisocial behaviour.

Some submitters even included claims that the link between income and crime had been demonstrated in studies on the subject:

> It's been generally accepted, since around the 1980s, that there is a genuine correlation between low-income status and high crime rates; this has been the finding of the majority of studies done over the years, and it does make sense on a basic, practical level.

As in Parramatta and Port Phillip, concerns expressed by submitters about the 'character' of neighbourhoods often confused physical phenomena with social relations. Sometimes concerns about character were tied to the potential impact of a development on what were termed 'character homes' or the appropriateness of a particular physical form, but often they were just as much about the types of people who would live in a development or the value of the homes being built:

> Adjoining properties and surrounding properties … are valued between $600 000 and $900 000. Therefore 'proposed uses for the site are in keeping with the predominant character of the neighbourhood' noted in [planning assessment documentation] is inaccurate. The … Estate is comprised of upmarket housing with a quiet and family orientated environment. The proposal is inconsistent with surrounding residences and would dramatically reduce value and irreversibly impact on the existing lifestyle.

The impact of proposed developments on property prices was raised in over a fifth of submissions, with many of these submissions making the point that a household had

invested a lot of money in their home and that it was unfair that it should be de-valued by an affordable housing development. We test whether affordable housing development does indeed have an influence on property sales values in the Australian context in Chapter 7.

Most submissions analysed in Brisbane were made by individuals, although there was one development where the same pro-forma letter had be used by several submitters. For that same development, a letter had been written and distributed by a local resident living close to one proposed project, encouraging others to object to an affordable housing proposal. It stated that:

> Social housing has its place but this [proposed development] is a very high density development with a potentially high impact on the local community. **Has any thought been given to the impact of clustering and concentrating so much disadvantage into one building?** How will this impact on the current residents of the area? … [the studio apartments that form part of the proposal] have a high turnover of occupancy and are notorious for housing persons just released from gaol and persons just out of drug rehabilitation. (emphasis original)

What is clear in this quote is an attempt to make people aware of an affordable housing proposal and simultaneously make them fear its potential impact. The information provided in the letter, as with many other similar letters distributed by community opponents of affordable housing, is not entirely false, but neither does it represent a balanced, neutral account.

Most of the anger among community members making submissions against affordable housing development in Brisbane was directed at NFP housing developers and BCC, the planning assessment authority. NFP developers were seen to be developing at densities that were too high, and to be providing their future residents with too little amenity, while consultation processes were also criticised and many people argued that the clustering of affordable housing residents was a mistake. BCC, on the other hand, was criticised by some submitters for letting NFP housing providers get away with overdevelopment in their projects, to be changing its planning controls to suit its own interests, and to be disregarding standard assessment processes, for instance by not providing the required period of time for resident feedback.

Interviewees from both local and State government believed that affordable housing projects were far more likely to encounter opposition from community members than market housing projects. Many put this down to negative perceptions of affordable housing residents held by large sections of the public. Interviewees believed that people were often uninterested in the positive aspects that a proposed affordable housing project could bring to an area because they were too fixated on the people who would live there. As one council planner explained, this was apparently true even of some mixed-tenure projects:

> … as soon as somebody hears … affordable housing that's it, they switch off about every other good aspect of it and go: 'it's affordable housing'. Even though affordable housing product may only constitute 20 or 30 per cent of the product, it's affordable housing.

When asked about the common concerns that people expressed with regard to proposed affordable housing projects, the same planner relayed the types of objections that he had encountered in his experience:

> Some of the ideas that came through were there's going to be parties every night, there's going to be vagrants, there's going to be strippers, there's going

to be prostitutes, there's going to be burnt out cars. That's what they constitute as affordable, they see as affordable.

Similar views were echoed by other interviewees and are reflected in quotes from submissions included above. The prospect of a group of disadvantaged people moving into the area was also a concern explicitly raised by residents in Mitchelton and Trinity Park, either on the grounds that problems with noise, crime and antisocial behaviour may result, or that the necessary local facilities for those people were not available locally.

6.3.3 How and why does community opposition to affordable housing escalate?

While it seemed from interviews that the majority of affordable housing projects proposed in Queensland were formally opposed by small numbers of people or no people at all, interviewees from both local and State government could easily recall many cases where opposition had gained considerable media and political attention. There were a few factors that interviewees felt contributed to a case becoming high profile or not; the role of local politicians and the media, and the type of area were the key ones identified. Several interviewees suggested that while local politicians were sometimes able to defuse community discontent by listening to people's concerns and gently advocating for affordable housing development, they could also fuel that opposition, especially when they could see an opportunity for political advantage. As one planner explained, based on his own experiences, community activists usually had very little hope of influencing the outcomes of planning decision-making unless they could get the local politician on side:

> If they don't get the ward councillor on side they've lost the plot. … the councillors I think are the key one in terms of influencing the decision by the council.

Local politicians were seen by many interviewees to be particularly likely to side with opponents of affordable housing development in the build-up to an election, often turning a local issue into one that is much higher in profile through their profile and political and media connections. We were told that local politicians had frequently supported community members in their opposition to development proposals in Queensland, hoping that by doing so they would be able to secure their political support; this was something we also found in Parramatta. Certainly this suggestion would seem to be borne out by evidence from Mitchelton.

Local newspapers were also seen by interviewees to play a major part in community opposition to affordable housing escalating, often in combination with local politicians. Interviewees from local government expressed their frustration at the way that newspaper articles reported cases of opposition to affordable housing primarily through the views of disgruntled residents, with very few positive messages about affordable housing to cut across that. As a council planner stated:

> … the paper gets a handle of it and what does the paper do? They just want to—to make it localised, they'll go to the people in the local street obviously and you're next door to it, they obviously don't go to the [home] way down [the street], then they go to the one next door. So the starting point is negative … [but affordable housing developers] should be using the local paper and whatever to try and get on the front foot for those things. But … perhaps it's not a good story … unless there is objections to it.

Planners suggested that the opposition to affordable housing projects generally did not last long in their experience, with opponents getting '*wound up*' for only a short

period of time, usually while the development proposal was being assessed. Once planning approval had been granted and construction completed, we were told, the opposition usually faded and disappeared altogether. Discussing the strategies that opponents of affordable housing typically use to express their concerns, interviewees suggested that submissions, phone calls, letters and petitions were common, with many people also going straight to the media or local politicians. According to several interviewees, opposition was almost always driven by a small number of individuals, with these people investing serious time and effort writing letters, door knocking and organising petitions. As a representative of the SHA put it:

> It's almost always a community advocate who has decided to act on everyone's behalf, has door knocked and it's got everyone signing off on [pro-forma] letters that come in.

In some cases, legal action was taken by opponents, but this was seen by interviewees to be rare. Planners explained that while lengthy petitions were often lodged against affordable housing proposals, many people who had signed those petitions seemed to know little of the cause, having signed it without really knowing what it was about:

> … sometimes there will be five, six, seven pages of petitions. Under our legislation we only have to advise the head petitioner and our lawyers have said the head petitioner is the name and address at the top of the page. So even if there's seven pages only seven of those names get advised of the decision. It's amazing the number of times that one of those seven people will come back to us and say, what's this about? Because it was in a shopping centre car park and they'll say, oh, I just signed it. So they actually had no [idea about the cause] …

6.3.4 Concluding thoughts

Opposition to SHI projects in Queensland seemed to have been less widespread and less concentrated than in the other states, perhaps because public housing has been exempt development for many years and because the SHA has sought to build within local planning controls as far as possible. Nevertheless, Mitchelton and Bluewater possibly represented the most effective resident-led opposition campaigns that we came across in the research, with both MAG and CCforB firmly believing that they had been given a mandate by the wider community to oppose the developments in question, and both effectively using politicians and the media to their advantage.

It seemed that two quite different strategies were adopted by affordable housing developers in Queensland as they sought to minimise opposition to their projects. One involved 'flying under the radar'—working within existing planning controls and minimising public notification requirements. The risk with this approach is that the lack of notification becomes an additional source of community anger and resentment, fuelling opposition. The second approach involved developers actively engaging community members at the conceptual stage of the design process, targeting key community members who might oppose development unless they could be brought onside. In Chapter 8, we return to reflect on these different approaches to involving local community members in the planning and development of affordable housing projects, with reference also to the findings from Parramatta and Port Phillip.

7   THE IMPACT OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT ON HOST AREAS

This chapter reports the findings from post-entry interview-surveys in Parramatta and hedonic modelling of the influence of affordable housing development on property sales values in Brisbane. The interview-surveys and hedonic modelling exercises were devised specifically in order to address research question 4: what are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?

7.1   Introduction

As we discussed in the literature review in Chapter 2, concerns about affordable housing development can be seen to revolve around one or more of three key issues:

1. Potential impacts on host neighbourhood: crime, property values and other valued aspects or features of the wider neighbourhood.

2. Characteristics of tenants: concerns about the types, characteristics and behaviours of people who are likely to live in the affordable housing project.

3. Built form and planning process: the physical form (e.g. bulk, style, density) of the proposed project and the process for planning assessment.

The evidence from the case study chapters (Chapters 4–6) supports this, with traffic and parking, physical form, amenity and issues around 'neighbourhood character' the most commonly raised issues of concern in submissions, but the characteristics of tenants, property values and crime also featuring frequently. In order to test the extent to which these feared effects of affordable housing development eventuate, the research team devised a two-fold approach to post-entry project impact assessment:

1. The first approach assessed the qualitative impact of new affordable housing developments on neighbours. This involved members of the research team visiting neighbourhoods in Parramatta where affordable housing projects had been opposed but completed since 2009 and asking residents to answer questions about that project's impact on them. One-hundred and fifty-four interview-surveys were completed, across Parramatta.

2. The second approach involved quantitative hedonic modelling of the influence of affordable housing developments in Brisbane on property sales prices in surrounding areas. The research team used a hedonic model to test whether proximity to affordable housing has an influence (positive or negative) on property sales values, as objectors often claim that it will. The accuracy of the model depended on the quality of the data and the number of affordable housing projects for which sales data in surrounding areas was available. In addition, it was necessary for the data to cover a period of several years after the affordable housing projects had been constructed, so as to assess change over time. In view of this, Brisbane was found to be the most appropriate city for the modelling work because affordable housing projects have been developed there in mixed-tenure neighbourhoods on a consistent basis over the last 10 years. This was only true of one other council area in Australia, and in the latter case fewer projects had been completed than in Brisbane.

Below, we discuss the key findings from the post-entry interview-surveys and hedonic modelling of property sales values.

7.1.1 Post-entry interview-surveys

An interview-survey schedule was devised in order to assess the qualitative effects of affordable housing development on host areas in Parramatta (Chapter 3). Interview-surveys (Appendix 2) were conducted in areas surrounding affordable housing projects that had been controversial when they were originally proposed in 2009, 2010 or 2011, and which had since been developed and occupied. Here, 'controversial' meant that one or more of the following had been the case: formal submissions had been made against the proposal; opposition had been reported in the media; and/or an 'unsupported development' sign had been erected outside the development site.

The team was able to identify two suitable privately-initiated projects for inclusion in the research, along with six initiated by the SHA. In addition, a privately-initiated project that had been extremely controversial and had subsequently been refused planning permission was included, in order to examine the concerns of objectors in this case and the (ultimately effective) oppositional strategies that they had used. The list of projects selected for post-entry interview surveys is shown in Table 16, the projects ranged in size from four dwellings to 26 dwellings.

The survey contained a total of 25 questions, although many could only be answered if the householder had actively opposed the controversial affordable housing project when it was originally proposed. Many participants spoke limited English and questions were sometimes omitted by the research team where it was felt that they might generate confusion (particularly the questions about area character).

Table 16: Projects selected for interview-survey data collection

Street	Suburb	No. of dwellings	Developer	Built form	Complete?	Other features
Markey Street	Guildford	12	SHA	1–2 storey	Yes	Seniors housing
Isabella Street	North Parramatta	12	Private	2 storey	No	Mixed-tenure
Bond Avenue	Toongabbie	4	SHA	2 storey	Yes	-
Kirk Avenue	Guildford	8	SHA	1 storey	Yes	Seniors housing
Victoria Road	Rydalmere	10 room boarding house	Private	2 storey	Yes	Boarding house
Excelsior Street	Merrylands	22	SHA	2 storey	Yes	-
Chamberlain Road	Guildford	19	SHA	1–2 storey	Yes	-
Aubrey Street	South Granville	26	SHA	2 storey	Yes	-
Gore Street	Parramatta	Conversion to create seven room boarding house	Private	No change	Yes	Boarding house, internal alterations only

As shown in Table 18, a total of 154 interview-surveys were completed across the nine projects. Between 14 and 20 interview-surveys were completed for each, meaning that householders in between one-fifth and one-third of the 60 homes most

likely to have been impacted by each controversial affordable housing development were surveyed. There was huge variation in the length of occupation: 23 participants had lived in their homes for 40 years or more, but others had been there for just a year. With people who had lived in the area for a short period of time, typically less than 12 months, the research team usually thanked them for their time but sought no further participation.

One-hundred and thirty-five participants answered the question about their type of dwelling occupation. The areas where surveys were conducted are highly mixed in terms of tenure and this is reflected in the sample. Of the 135 participants, 74 per cent were owner-occupiers and 26 per cent were renting (private, government or NFP). The proportion of the 135 participants who owned, or were buying, their property is shown below (Table 17).

Table 17: Type of dwelling occupation in locations of interview survey data collection

Affordable housing project location	Proportion of participants who owned, or were buying, their property
Markey Street	79%
Isabella Street	85%
Bond Avenue	46%
Kirk Avenue	63%
Victoria Road	88%
Excelsior Street	73%
Chamberlain Road	82%
Aubrey Street	63%
Gore Street	77%

The projects around which the proportion of participants who were owner-occupiers was lowest (Bond Avenue, Kirk Avenue and Aubrey Street) were in areas where the SHA has historically had large landholdings, with the majority of rental properties in these areas owned and managed by government or NFP housing providers.

The first section of the interview-survey asked people about how their neighbourhood had or had not changed in the last five years, also asking them to describe its character. The main purpose of this section was to get people thinking and talking about the area and to make them feel comfortable, talking as they were about their own opinion on something that they knew well. Overall, few people felt that their area had changed for the better in the last five years. One-hundred and nine people provided a definitive response to this question. Fifty-four per cent felt that there had been no change in their area, 40 per cent that the area had changed for the worse and 6 per cent that the area had changed for the better. There was one project where a particularly high proportion of participants believed that the area had changed for the worse: 89 per cent of participants answering this question at Excelsior Street, Merrylands, believed that the area had become worse in the last five years.

The question about area character was asked because of the role that character had played in the opposition to affordable housing development in Parramatta and the changes that had been made to the A-SEPP. This question often confused people, with some participants asking for options or clarification because they had no idea what we were looking for. People generally described their area through its people and their own personal experiences, rather than through the physical form or

appearance of the area: no one described the character as being about the types of buildings or their style for instance. The most common responses to this question were 'quiet', 'noisy', 'busy', 'good', 'nice', family-based', 'friendly' and 'safe'.

The second and third section of the interview-survey focused on people's response to the controversial affordable housing project when it was originally proposed: did they object to it and if so, then how and why? Responses to this section were patchy, depending on the extent to which people had been involved in the opposition. In general, we found that many more people had been concerned about the developments than had formally objected to them. In fact, we found that relatively few people had actively engaged in the opposition. Instead, most recalled that there had been one or a handful of community members who had driven the opposition, sometimes visiting homes to ask householders to sign petitions or lodge submissions with the SHA or council. We did speak to a few of these ringleaders, sometimes engaging them in more general discussions of their concerns and the tactics that they had used to oppose the affordable housing proposal in question. These tactics included written submissions and pro-forma letters, lobbying politicians, community meetings and contacting the media. Where participants told us that they had initially been concerned when they found out that the affordable housing project was proposed, they usually identified traffic and parking, density and issues about who would be living in the properties as the primary source of their anxieties. These findings support those gathered from submissions data in Parramatta (Chapter 4).

Anecdotally, we were told by several participants that the people who had been most fiercely opposed to the controversial affordable housing development had sold their home and moved on, either before or shortly after the project was completed; what is termed 'panic selling' in the literature (de Souza Briggs et al. 1999). We did find that many of the residents living in properties close to the controversial affordable housing development had only recently moved in. A further development of the present study could seek to test whether property sales in areas around recently-completed affordable housing projects are higher in number than would be expected under normal circumstances (i.e. had that affordable housing project not been built).

Of the 154 interview-surveys completed, 134 provided a definitive response to the questions about the overall effect of the controversial affordable housing development on the area, now that it had been completed. Table 18 shows the number and percentage of these 134 participants that had noticed negative effects. Of these 134, six people (5%) had noticed positive effects, mostly to do with the attractive appearance of new buildings, friendly new neighbours or an improvement on what had been on the site before.

Table 18: Completed interview-surveys by project

Street	No. of dwellings	Developer	Total surveys completed	No. post-entry assessment responses	No. and percentage of participants reporting negative effect(s)
Markey Street	12	SHA	20	18	3 (17%)
Isabella Street	12	Private	14	-	-
Bond Avenue	4	SHA	15	13	2 (15%)
Kirk Avenue	8	SHA	16	16	0 (0%)
Victoria Road	10 room boarding house	Private	16	16	1 (6%)
Excelsior St	22	SHA	19	19	9 (47%)
Chamberlain Road	19	SHA	18	18	8 (44%)
Aubrey Street	26	SHA	16	14	3 (21%)
Gore Street	Conversion to create 7 room boarding house	Private	20	20	4 (20%)
Total	-	-	154	134	30 (22%)

It is clear from Table 18 that there was variation in the degree to which neighbours felt that there had been negative effects as a result of the controversial affordable housing projects. Broadly speaking, the eight projects where post-entry interview-surveys were conducted can be split into three categories, based on the level of effect that they were seen by neighbours to have had.

Little or no effect: For Kirk Avenue and Victoria Road, almost no one had noticed negative effects from development, despite both projects initially being controversial. Kirk Avenue is a small project consisting of seniors housing, it was reduced by the SHA from two storeys to one storey following opposition to its development from neighbours. Victoria Road is a boarding house located on a major arterial road with only one residential neighbour. Located next to a school, most of the opposition to this latter project was said by neighbours to have been from the school parent teachers association, not necessarily from those living closest to the project itself.

Negative effects for a few: Data from interview-surveys around Bond Avenue, Markey Street, Aubrey Street and Gore Street revealed that a small number of households had experienced negative effects from these developments. Bond Avenue is a small project on a quiet residential street. Where negative effects were raised by neighbours in relation to that development, these were mostly about a single 'problem tenant' that had recently been moved out. In Markey Street, negative effects had mostly been felt by immediate neighbours, and usually they were to do with increased traffic and problems with parking. The negative effects of the Aubrey Street development had also been experienced most by immediate neighbours, and they typically concerned noise and privacy, as well as the antisocial behaviour of certain residents and a perception that the project represented overdevelopment of the site. Gore Street is a

boarding house in a converted freestanding dwelling. Located in a quiet street dominated by privately-owned freestanding dwellings, the negative effects identified by neighbours were usually to do with noise and parking. Most people, however, accepted that while there had initially been 'panic' in the street about the proposed boarding house, their fears had not materialised.

Negative effects for many: close to half of householders surveyed in properties surrounding Chamberlain Road and Excelsior Street reported negative effects arising from the developments. Both these projects comprised around 20 dwellings and both were quite different in scale to the buildings that surrounded them (Figure 13). In Chamberlain Road, these negative effects were almost all to do with parking problems and alleged drug dealing by one resident. In Excelsior Street, the negative effects were more varied. They ranged from garbage being left on sidewalks and lawns not being mown, to parking, noise, and regular police call outs. In Excelsior Street, the problems identified in relation to the new affordable housing project were underlain by a widespread feeling that the local area had been in decline for many years. It is also important to note that there were several other SHI developments in streets surrounding Excelsior Street and that participants often conflated worsening problems with crime, traffic and parking with a general increase in the number of multi-unit developments in the area.

Figure 13: Photograph of Chamberlain Street project (three buildings on right) and adjacent properties

With the exception of Excelsior Street and Chamberlain Road, few people living close to the eight new affordable housing projects listed above had noticed any negative effects from their development. For all eight projects combined, 22 per cent of participants had noticed negative effects, the remaining 78 per cent had noticed little or no effect, or they had noticed positive effects. These findings are significant, particularly given that (a) the research team deliberately sought out and selected the projects that had been the most controversial; and (b) achieved participation from between one-fifth and one-third of the 60 or so residents likely to have been most affected by that development. With the projects that comprised 12 dwellings or fewer, many of the residents surveyed, especially those living more than 50 metres from the development site, were completely unaware that new affordable housing had even been developed. This was especially true where they lived on an adjoining street, around the corner, or where their home was separated from the new development by a major road.

Surprisingly, the surveyed project where neighbours remained most angry about affordable housing development was also the only one that had not been built. Around the Isabella Street site, many residents were still unhappy about the proposal for a privately-financed affordable housing project under the A-SEPP. Some residents refused to talk to us because they believed we had been hired by the NSW Government to find a way of obtaining planning approval for the controversial affordable housing project. The concerns of community members about the proposal had primarily been about parking and traffic, the proposed multi-unit physical form, the A-SEPP planning process (Chapter 4) and 'the calibre of people' that would ultimately

live in the project, some of whom might be 'undesirable'. We also spoke to key leaders of the opposition campaign who revealed that they had petitioned and had lobbied local councillors, and that this had got them results. Following the amendments to the A-SEPP in 2011, the controversial proposal had been refused planning permission by Parramatta City Council. In the context of this study's research aims, it was significant that community angst was greatest in the one case where affordable housing development had not proceeded. This could be because the actual effects of affordable housing in the other eight cases had not been as bad as initially feared, and/or because people in Isabella Street remained hostile and vigilant because they feared that the unwanted proposal might be resuscitated at some point.

7.2 Hedonic modelling of property sales values

A concern often raised by opponents of an affordable housing proposal is that the value of their property will be diminished as a result of development (Chapter 2). A key aim of this study, addressing research question 4, was to test whether this fear is borne out by experience in Australian cities: what influence does the development of an affordable housing project have on surrounding property sales values? To do this, the research team ran two hedonic models to test the extent to which the development of seventeen affordable housing projects in Brisbane had influenced the values of properties sold in surrounding areas in the years subsequent to their public announcement.[5] The results from these two models are discussed below.

7.2.1 Model 1: Influence by distance

The first hedonic model (Model 1) focussed on the impact of affordable housing developments on property sales values at different levels of proximity. One hundred metre intervals were used as the base unit, with modelling performed at 100, 200, 300, 400 and 500 metres to the closest affordable housing development. This test sought to highlight the spatial impact of affordable housing developments on property sales values. In all, a total of 17 developments were included in this first hedonic model. A summary of the outcomes is included in Table 19, below.

Across all 17 affordable housing developments included in Model 1, proximity to these developments appears to have had a generally positive impact on property sales values. Specifically, only properties located within 100 metres of affordable housing developments experienced negative impacts from that proximity, while properties at least 100 metres away experienced positive impacts, where the degree of the impact decreases as distance increases. These results, however, were based on small sample sizes for the 100 metres (n=274) and 200 metres (n=781) intervals. Furthermore, results at the 200 metres interval were not statistically significant at any confidence level. As such, drawing a conclusion that 100m is the threshold where the negative impacts of affordable housing developments on local property sales values cease would be crude and potentially incorrect. Based on these sample sizes, the results of the hedonic model for property sales located within the 100 and 200 metres

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[5] The public announcement of the affordable housing development was used for the modelling rather than completion date because there was in some cases a lengthy period between the announcement of the project and its completion (often due to opposition). We wanted to ensure that any 'panic sales' from existing residents were included in the analysis, so took public announcement as the starting point for the model. We were provided with completion dates for each project by developers. We were then able to obtain public announcement dates for those projects from the Brisbane City Council planning portal. Where these were not available (for some earlier projects data was missing) we conservatively estimated the announcement date based on trends in other records, ensuring that the full period between announcement and completion was included in the model's sample (i.e. including a period in the model that was at least as long as the actual period between announcement and completion would have been).

intervals are disregarded and have therefore not been considered in the analysis reported in the remainder of this section.

Table 19: Affordable housing developments and their impacts on local property sales by distance, Brisbane

Distance	Valid sales	Standard coefficient	Impact	Significance	Adjusted R Square
100m	274	0.118	Negative	0.016 *	0.519
200m	781	-0.007	Positive	0.798	0.454
300m	1,510	-0.051	Positive	0.008 **	0.454
400m	2,490	-0.057	Positive	0.000 ***	0.411
500m	3,578	-0.036	Positive	0.006 **	0.392

Note: * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$

Results produced by the hedonic model at the 300, 400 and 500 metres intervals were all statistically significant at the 99 per cent confidence interval or higher, and as such these results accounted for 99 per cent or more of the sample included for analysis. Further, the hedonic model produced results which show that, at these intervals, proximity to affordable housing developments had positive impacts on property sales values. In other words, *the closer a property was to an affordable housing development, the higher its sales value was, compared to other properties of similar characteristics (number of bedrooms, number of bathrooms etc.).*

These positive impacts were, however, generally minimal, accounting for less than 6 per cent of a property's sales value, compared to the considerably higher impacts that the number of bedrooms (30% or higher), the number of bathrooms (20% or higher) and the number of off-street parking spaces (20% or higher) had on property sales values. It can therefore be concluded that while proximity to affordable housing developments may have positive impacts on sales values of properties located up to 500 metres away from those developments, these impacts are generally minimal, especially when compared to other housing characteristics such as the number of bedrooms and bathrooms.

7.2.2 Model 2: Impact by individual project

A second hedonic model (Model 2) was performed, which focused on the impact of affordable housing developments on local property sales values at the level of individual projects. This provided the research team with an opportunity to examine the extent to which the influence of affordable housing developments on property values varied according to project size and contextual differences. In all, 14 affordable housing projects around Brisbane were included in this hedonic model. Three of the projects included in Model 1 were excluded from Model 2 because in these three cases there were fewer than 50 valid sales records for properties within 500 metres of the site. The 14 affordable housing developments included in Model 2 were located throughout the Brisbane metropolitan area but mostly in inner city and middle-ring suburbs. For a list of all 14 affordable housing projects and a summary of the impacts of affordable housing developments on local property sales vales, see Table 20.

Table 20: Affordable housing projects in Brisbane and their impacts on local property sales values

Project	Valid sales	Standard coefficient	Impact	Significance
Danby Lane, Nundah	261	0.045	Negative	0.427
Alderley Avenue, Alderley	411	0.131	Negative	0.000 ***
Thanbarran Place, Richlands	95	-0.081	Positive	0.504
Musk Avenue, Kelvin Grove	83	0.09	Negative	0.229
Guthrie Street, Paddington	457	-0.05	Positive	0.126
Terrace Street, Spring Hill	493	0.001	Negative	0.977
Colton Avenue, Lutwyche	251	0.09	Negative	0.022 *
School Street, Kelvin Grove	190	0.053	Negative	0.364
Ryan Street, West End	278	-0.09	Positive	0.034 *
Earnshaw Road, Nudgee	110	0.042	Negative	0.590
Warry Street, Fortitude Valley	250	-0.032	Positive	0.462
Alford Street, New Farm	298	-0.041	Positive	0.263
Welsby Street, New Farm	232	0.255	Negative	0.000 ***
Hurworth Street, Bowen Hills	71	0.028	Negative	0.832

Note: * $P < 0.05$; *** $P < 0.001$

Results of Model 2 show that affordable housing developments have mixed impacts on local property sales values. For nine of the projects, proximity to affordable housing developments had a negative impact on sales values. For five projects, however, the reverse was true and close proximity to affordable housing developments had a positive impact on sales values. This suggests that affordable housing developments have no universally positive or negative impacts on local property sales values in Australian cities, something that has also been found to be the case in the United States (Ellen 2007; Ellen et al. 2007). In our data, there was no correlation between the number of dwellings in a project and the type of impact that the project had on property sales values in surrounding areas. Further, of the 14 projects included in Model 2, only two produced statistically significant results at the 95 per cent confidence interval and two produced statistically significant results at the 99 per cent confidence interval (Table 20). As such, while there were mixed impacts on the local property sales values located within close proximity to affordable housing projects, these impacts were generally minimal and in most cases could more likely be accounted for by contextual differences rather than proximity to affordable housing developments.

Of the fourteen affordable housing developments included in the model, four then produced statistically significant results at the 95 per cent confidence interval or higher, suggesting that in these cases proximity to affordable housing was a significant factor influencing property sales values in surrounding areas. In three cases, this influence was negative, in one it was positive. These four projects are analysed in greater detail below. The street addresses of these four projects are intentionally not identified, but maps showing the 500 metres buffer around the affordable housing project are included to provide some contextual information for readers. In this chapter, the results of the hedonic model are summarised for each of the four projects, with further details of the results provided separately in Appendix 1.

As discussed in Chapter 3, first-order autocorrelation of the error terms were found not to be an issue in this analysis, as the Durbin-Watson statistics of each model performed resulted in an index higher than 1. Of the four developments included for further discussion below, all had a Durbin-Watson statistic between 1.6 and 1.9. While this indicates that first-order autocorrelation is not an issue, any index that is less than 2 should be interpreted with caution. This is taken into consideration in the analysis detailed below.

Statistically significant negative impact on property sales values: Alderley Avenue, Alderley

Alderley is an inner-city suburb located 7 kilometres from Brisbane CBD. It is one of Brisbane's older suburbs, with a mix of low-density residential, commercial and light industrial uses. The affordable housing project included in Model 2 is located on Alderley Avenue, 150 metres from Alderley Railway Station (Figure 14). The affordable housing project included in the model was completed in 2006 and comprises a mix of studios, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments, totalling 16 dwellings.

Figure 14: Aerial photograph of 1 square kilometre area around the Alderley Avenue affordable housing project. The extent of the 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model is shown as a dashed line and the location of rail station is shown towards centre of diagram

Source: Adapted from Google Earth

Alderley is a relatively affluent suburb, with above average household income (ABS 2012). Its housing stock is also of relatively high value, with median mortgage repayments and weekly rent around 10 per cent higher than the Queensland average. Increasing numbers of medium and high density dwellings have been built in the suburb in recent years. Between October 1999 and September 2012, more than 2396 properties were sold within the 500 metres buffer shown in Figure 14, with 1438 sold since the proposal for the affordable housing project was publicly notified. For the latter period, the average sale value was $501 558.19. After geocoding and multicollinearity testing, 411 of these property sales records were included in the

hedonic model. These 411 property sales records had a slightly lower average sales value of $470 552.80.

Standardised results of the hedonic model show that all five factors included in the analysis were statistically significant factors at the 99 per cent confidence interval in impacting property sales values in the sample area. Specifically, the number of bedrooms accounted for 40.6 per cent of property sales values, followed by the number of off-street parking spaces (25.1%). Proximity to affordable housing developments accounted for only 13.1 per cent of the sales value. In real terms, each additional bedroom accounts for a $96 191.40 increase in sales value, while each additional metre away from affordable housing only increased the sales value on average by $253.38 (see Appendix 1). As such, while the impact of affordable housing development on property sales values in Alderley was statistically significant, its impact was minimal, especially when compared to the other factors tested in the hedonic model.

Contextually, the minimal negative impact proximity to the affordable housing development had on local property sales values can be further explained by a number of other factors. The affordable housing development is located close to a local commercial centre where shops and businesses dominate, and where the proportion of dwellings in multi-unit blocks is considerably higher than in surrounding areas. Within 100 metres of the development there are relatively few residential properties and the majority of property sales records included in the hedonic model were for detached dwellings further away from this commercial centre as a result. This partially explains the negative impact that proximity to the affordable housing development in Alderley had on local property sales values: in Alderley, the further a property is away from the affordable housing project, the more likely it is to be a higher-value detached dwelling, as opposed to a lower-value dwelling in a multi-unit block.

Statistically significant negative impact on property sales values: Colton Avenue, Lutwyche

Lutwyche is an inner suburb of Brisbane, located approximately 5 kilometres north of the Brisbane CBD. It is a mainly residential suburb with a mix of low to medium density dwellings, with increasing numbers of higher density dwellings having been built in recent years. A high proportion of private dwellings are rented rather than owner-occupied (ABS 2012). The affordable housing project included in the hedonic model is located at the end of a cul-de-sac, with a creek and bike path directly to its west (see Figure 15). The project was completed in January 2009 and comprises a mix of studios, one-bedroom, two-bedroom and three-bedroom apartments, totalling 29 dwellings. The proportion of residents on low incomes in Lutwyche and median weekly rents are similar to the Queensland averages, although median mortgage repayments are slightly higher (ABS 2012).

Figure 15: Aerial photograph of 1 square kilometre area around the Colton Avenue affordable housing project. Extent of 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model is shown as a dashed line

Source: Adapted from Google Earth

Within the 500 metres buffer (Figure 15) in Lutwyche, 1270 properties were sold between October 1999 and September 2012, with an average sales value of $340 193.82. In the period between the public announcement of the Colton Avenue affordable housing project and September 2012, the average sales value of properties sold was $493 026.05, a significant increase compared to the earlier part of the 2000s. After geocoding and multicollineality tests, 251 property sales records were included in the hedonic model for the Colton Avenue affordable housing project, with an average sales value of $440 152.19, slightly below the suburb's average over the same period. Standardised results of the hedonic model show that the five factors included for analysis impacted the property sales values in the sample area to varying degrees of statistical significance. The most significant factors were the number of bedrooms, bathrooms and off-street parking, all of which were statistically significant at the 99.9 per cent confidence interval. Further, these three factors accounted for the majority of property sales values in the sample area, with the number of bedrooms accounting for almost half (48.8%) of a property's sales value (see Appendix 1).

Proximity to the affordable housing development at Colton Avenue had a negative impact on property sales value in the sample area, so that for each additional metre away from the affordable housing project sales value increased by $134.23. Proximity to the affordable housing development, however, only accounted for 9 per cent of a property's sales value in the sample area, making it much less influential than the impact of the number of bedrooms, bathrooms and off-street parking. As with Alderley Avenue, there are also contextual factors that at least partially explain these negative impacts of proximity to the Colton Avenue affordable housing project. Again, the majority of property sales recorded included in the hedonic model for Lutwyche were in locations some distance away from the affordable housing project, in the lower-density parts of the suburb where detached dwellings dominate. By contrast, the Colton Avenue affordable housing development is located in an area of Lutwyche where the proportion of dwellings in multi-unit blocks is much higher. Dwellings in

multi-unit blocks are typically smaller and lower-value than the detached dwellings that dominate further away from the affordable housing project. The higher proportion of multi-unit dwellings in the area close to the affordable housing project is therefore likely to account for at least some of the observed increase in property sales values as the distance of the sale away from that project increases.

Statistically significant positive impact on property sales values: Ryan Street, West End

West End is an inner suburb located just south of Brisbane CBD and is surrounded on two sides (south and west) by the Brisbane River. The suburb is dominated by low-density residential dwellings, but the number of multi-unit apartment blocks has increased in recent years, especially close to the river. In 2011, apartments accounted for about one-third of all residential properties in West End (ABS 2012). The affordable housing development in West End is located on Ryan Street towards the southern end of the suburb, two blocks north of the Brisbane River. As such, one-third of the 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model was accounted for by the Brisbane River, where no sales were recorded for obvious reasons (Figure 16). Further, another one-fifth of the sample area in the northwest was accounted for by large industrial warehouses. The majority of property sales records included in the hedonic model were therefore of lower-density detached houses and medium-rise apartment blocks to the west of the suburb. The affordable housing development was completed in January 2004 and comprises a total of eleven studio, one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartments.

West End is a relatively affluent suburb, with above average income compared to the rest of Queensland. Its housing stock is also of relatively high value, with median weekly rent about 30 per cent higher than compared to the rest of Queensland. Likewise, median mortgage repayments were also around 40 per cent above the Queensland average. Three-fifths of dwellings in West End were rented in 2011, with owner-occupation accounting for just one-third of all households in the suburb (ABS 2012). Between October 1999 and September 2012, there were 2857 property sales within the 500 metres buffer in West End (Figure 16), with an average sales value of $560 559.55. Since the announcement of the affordable housing development, there were 2434 property sales, with an average sales value of $610 121.48. After geocoding and multicollinearity testing, 278 property sales records were included in the hedonic model, with an average sales value of $729 086.29, considerably higher than the suburb average over the same period.

Results of the hedonic model show that proximity to the affordable housing development on Ryan Street had a positive impact on property sales values. In real terms, property sales value decreased by $317.33 for every metre further away from the affordable housing development. In standardised terms, however, proximity to the development accounted for just 9 per cent of a property sales value within the sample area, with the number of bedrooms accounting for around half (48.1%) of the value.

Figure 16: Aerial photograph of 1 kilometre area around the Ryan Street affordable housing project. Extent of 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model is shown as a dashed line

Source: Adapted from Google Earth

The result for Ryan Street is in direct contrast to a common concern in community opposition to affordable housing developments; that proximity to such developments would diminish local property values. However, as with the negative impacts outlined in the cases above, it is unlikely that this positive impact was actually a result of proximity to the affordable housing project, with other contextual factors likely to have been more influential. The positive impact at Ryan Street can most likely be explained by the location of the affordable housing development. For most of the property sales records used in the hedonic model, distance away from the affordable housing development means distance away from the Brisbane River, and as such the likelihood of a property having river views also decreases. Because the affordable housing project is located so close to the river, the further the sales record location away from the project the further it is from the river, meaning that the premium paid for proximity to the river also decreases.

Statistically significant negative impact on property sales values: Welsby Street, New Farm

New Farm is an inner suburb located just 2 kilometres east of the Brisbane CBD on the north bank of the Brisbane River. It is bounded by the Brisbane River on three sides (east, south and west), and is dominated by lower density detached houses throughout the suburb, albeit with increasing numbers of newer apartment buildings along the river. The affordable housing development in New Farm is located on Welsby Street in the eastern part of the suburb, about two blocks west of the Brisbane River. As such, around one-fifth of the 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model is comprised of the Brisbane River, where no sales were recorded. Further, another considerable proportion of the sample area is taken up by open space (see Figure 17). The affordable housing development included in the hedonic model was

completed in November 2004. It comprises a mix of one- and two-bedroom apartments, totalling 10 dwellings.

New Farm is a relatively affluent suburb, with above average income (25% above the Queensland average for families without children, and 50% above the Queensland average for families with children). Like many other inner suburbs, private rental is the main tenure type, with owner-occupation accounting for 40 per cent of all households. Housing stock in New Farm is also of relatively high value, with median mortgage repayments one-fifth higher than the Queensland average, and median rent one-sixth higher. Between October 1999 and September 2012, there were 6158 properties sold within the 500 metres buffer (Figure 17), with an average sales value of $564 886.84. Since the announcement of the affordable development, there were 4278 property sales at an average of $667 417.67. After geocoding and multicollinearity test, 232 property sales records located within the 500 metres buffer were included for hedonic modelling, with an average sales value of $947 405.80, considerably higher than the average sales value for this suburb over the same period.

Results of the hedonic model show that proximity to the affordable housing development had a negative impact on local property sales values. In real terms, each additional metre away from the affordable housing development on Welsby Street increases property sales value by $1295.40. Further, in standardised terms, Welsby Street project was the only project of the fourteen affordable housing developments included in Model 2 where proximity to the project accounted for more than 15 per cent of a property's sales value within the sample area, at 25.5 per cent. This means that proximity to the affordable housing project at Welsby Street had a greater impact on property sales values within the 500 metres buffer than did lot size (10.7%) or the number of bathrooms (10.2%) (see Appendix 1).

Figure 17: Aerial photograph of 1 square kilometre area around the Welsby Street affordable housing project. The extent of the 500 metres buffer used for the hedonic model is shown as a dashed line

Source: Adapted from Google Earth

Once again, the increase in property sales values further away from the affordable housing development can be explained by several contextual factors. First, the area in which the affordable housing project at Welsby Street is located is characterised by high numbers of multi-unit blocks, whereas the areas further away to the west and north are dominated by generally higher-value detached dwellings. Because of the effect of the Brisbane River and open space on the sample, a location further away from the Welsby Street affordable housing project also generally means closer proximity to the Brisbane CBD.

7.2.3 Reflections on the results of the hedonic modelling

The results of the two hedonic models show that the impact of affordable housing development on property sales values in surrounding areas is minimal and not universally positive or negative. This echoes the findings of similar research undertaken in the United States and discussed in Chapter 2. Even where proximity to affordable housing was found to have a statistically significant impact on property sales values in surrounding areas, we found that this relationship was more likely explained by spatial variations in dwelling types within the 500 metres buffer area and other contextual factors to do with proximity to public transport, services and water frontages, rather than by proximity to an affordable housing project. We can conclude from our analysis that the development of affordable housing can have a small positive or negative impact on property values in surrounding areas up to a distance of 500 metres away, but that these impacts, where they do exist, will be minimal and may well be outweighed by other locational factors.

We therefore find no evidence to support the argument that the development of affordable housing in an area will have a universally negative impact on surrounding property values. In fact, the impact of affordable housing development on property sales values was found to be either positive or negative, and either way, it was minimal compared to the impact of other housing and locational characteristics. We also found no evidence of a correlation between the size of an affordable housing project and the impact that it had on property sales values in surrounding areas. What our findings do seem to suggest is that where an affordable housing project is developed in an area with high levels of amenity (for instance where it is close to services, public transport or water frontages), that project is unlikely to have any noticeable impact on property sales values in surrounding areas, positive or negative.

7.3 Summary

This chapter specifically addressed research question 4; what are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas? The findings were reported of interview-surveys conducted with residents living in parts of Parramatta where controversial affordable housing projects have recently been built and occupied. Twenty-two per cent of the residents surveyed had noticed negative effects from the recently-completed affordable housing development, with the remainder noticing little or no change, or positive changes. The negative effects were concentrated around a small number of projects and were usually to do with parking, noise, privacy and individual 'problem residents'. We also discussed the findings of two hedonic modelling exercises testing the influence of affordable housing development in Brisbane on property sales values in surrounding areas. We found that the impact of affordable housing development on property sales values in surrounding areas can be either positive or negative, but that it is usually minimal either way. The influence of any impact of proximity to affordable housing projects on property sales values seems to be far outweighed by other characteristics of the property and its location.

8   UNDERSTANDING COMMUNITY OPPOSITION TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In this chapter, we bring together the data from the four case studies and the literature review, looking at what they tell us about the phenomenon of community opposition to affordable housing. What is the relationship between opposition to affordable housing development and different policy emphases? Who objects to affordable housing development and why do they object? What form does the opposition take? How and why does the opposition escalate? What impact does affordable housing development have on host areas? The chapter is structured in line with the study's first four research questions. In the next chapter, we then look at what implications the research findings have for policy-makers and practitioners as they seek to mitigate or address community opposition to affordable housing development.

8.1   What is the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing?

This study's findings suggest that the majority of affordable housing proposals do not attract a high level of formal opposition, even in cases where neighbours have been formally notified. For instance, Parramatta was one of just a handful of cases in NSW where there was high-profile opposition to affordable housing proposals under the A-SEPP, but even here many proposals encountered little or no opposition. The same is true of the case studies in Victoria and Queensland, none of which were typical.

However, we did find evidence of an association between the extent of notification and the level of formal objection encountered: projects where there had been a reduced public notification process generally encountered less opposition in the form of written submissions. Notwithstanding this, it was also clear from the case studies that a reduced notification process could sometimes be a factor intensifying community opposition to an affordable housing proposal, with 'flying under the radar' a risky approach for developers. In all three states, affordable housing developers stated an overall preference for a limited statutory notification process. However, in several cases a limited statutory notification process was not seen to mitigate against opportunities for community involvement in project planning and design; some NFP developers sought to minimise the formal planning hurdles that they must overcome, but still pro-actively engaged neighbours at an early stage of the process as a way of both mitigating opposition and improving development outcomes.

According to our interviewees, opposition to affordable housing development is most likely in affluent neighbourhoods and those that can be characterised as 'aspirational'. Such a suggestion is supported by our findings from Port Phillip and Queensland, and from the mapping exercise undertaken in Parramatta, which showed that the number of submissions received against affordable housing proposals were higher in more affluent parts of the council area (Chapter 4). It is important to note, however, that there could have been other factors at play in Parramatta, with varied planning assessment processes another probable influence. Our analysis of submission data revealed little association between the number of submissions received against affordable housing proposals and the proportion of households owning and renting. In terms of the characteristics of community members, it would seem from this study that income is a more important predictor of opposition than is occupancy type. Of course, there is often a close relationship between affluence and home ownership, meaning that it may be unhelpful to separate them in this way.

Beyond socio-economic group and occupancy type, there were other factors that seemed, from interviews and submission data, to increase the likelihood that a proposed affordable housing project would be opposed by community members. In streets or neighbourhoods where there was no precedent for affordable housing and/or multi-unit development, opposition to proposals seemed particularly fierce. As one member of the research team put it, affordable housing developers '*should not be pioneers of built form*' if they want to avoid opposition to their developments. According to interviewees, push-back against affordable housing was also common where there was existing anger in the community, most often directed at governments or non-government developers, or where community members were fearful about the consequences of development for the area as a whole, particularly where that area was already seen by them to be in decline. Because of their access to a high level of financial resource, their political and media savvy, and their social and professional networks, certain objectors were able to mount highly effective opposition campaigns against affordable housing development. Sometimes they secured concessions from the developer or forced the abandonment of projects altogether. The case studies demonstrate wide disparities in the capacity of community activist groups to get their way, with the resources available to them often determining their effectiveness. In general, the opposition appeared to be highly-localised, with most submissions made against affordable housing proposals coming from people living close by.

The fiercest campaigns of opposition to affordable housing development appear to be co-ordinated through the actions of one or several 'ringleaders'. These people, often those living closest to the proposal, are the ones that arrange petitions, call local politicians and media contacts, write pro-forma letters and visit the homes of their neighbours, encouraging the latter to participate in the opposition. It seemed that in most cases these small groups disbanded once a decision had been reached on the proposal to which they were opposed: few community organisations that had been established to oppose affordable housing in Parramatta between 2009 and 2011 still existed in 2012 and interviewees told us that community opposition tends to be most fierce early on, with levels of anger and the spread of the opposition falling away over time. This is supported by the literature on the topic, see Chapter 2. In some cases, however, groups established specifically to oppose affordable housing proposals became permanent fixtures. In Mitchelton and Bluewater, the groups established to oppose affordable housing proposals still exist today, both now with broader agendas. Both were led by highly motivated and well-resourced individuals, something that would seem to be a pre-requisite for such groups to stand the test of time.

The planning system provides the key mechanism through which debates over affordable housing development can occur. Delays in the planning process generate additional costs for affordable housing developers. As such, a fast-tracked planning assessment is often preferred by them. In Queensland, unpublished SHA figures and interview data suggest that a fast-tracked process with limited notification can be widely acceptable to community members, where it does not come into conflict with local planning controls (and perhaps with the exception of a small number of cases). Such a process has existed for many years in that state. SHA projects are built within local planning controls as standard practice, and code-assessable development is part of the council planning process. In Parramatta, however, where the A-SEPP introduced both a new planning assessment track for SHA projects and made certain forms of multi-unit development permissible in all residential zones, irrespective of local planning controls, the planning system became part of the problem for some community members, with many people questioning the fairness and outcomes of these new planning assessment processes. It is understandable that some community members and local politicians were angry and confused by the way in which the A-

SEPP made certain forms of multi-unit development permissible in areas that were zoned by Parramatta City Council for single-family housing.

Much of the opposition from residents and politicians in Parramatta concerned the way in which the A-SEPP over-rode local planning controls and had been introduced by the Department of Planning with little or no consultation, albeit that councils were required to make planning assessments based on its provisions. Some politicians from local councils were ringleaders in the opposition and without their involvement, the opposition would surely not have gained the same level of media attention. An obvious first step for governments in reducing opposition to affordable housing development would therefore seem to be reducing the opposition to a policy from different government agencies, especially those bodies that will ultimately have some responsibility for administering it. We return to discuss this in the next chapter.

There will inevitably be tensions between and within tiers of government for as long as governments exist, but without involvement and buy-in from local government, state-level affordable housing policies such as the A-SEPP are more vulnerable to the sorts of problems witnessed in Parramatta—a place where the City Council was actually supportive of the principle of affordable housing development. The A-SEPP in its original form was always going to be unpopular with local councils because it overrode local planning controls, forced council officers or politicians to approve development proposals that contravened those local planning controls and gave responsibility for the assessment of certain SHA proposals to the SHA. On top of this, the lack of consultation with councils on the implementation of the policy generated further resentment from planning officers and politicians. The combined effects were to create an environment in which local politicians could use the policy both for their own political advantage and to discredit the NSW Government.

If a policy is to provide fast-tracked planning assessment processes for affordable housing development then it is imperative that the basic physical form permissible on any given site is known to community members before any proposal is forthcoming. Otherwise, there is the risk that a lack of knowledge of what is and is not permissible will lead to the affordable housing development being opposed by community members. In the Queensland cases and Parramatta, community members were often particularly resentful and fearful about affordable housing proposals where they had little or no information about that proposal. In the absence of information on what a proposed building will look like, who will manage the property and who will live there, community members cannot be blamed for being suspicious, nervous and fearing the worst. An information vacuum also creates the opportunity for scaremongering by objectors, with neutral community members receiving no positive messages or information to counter this.

It is crucial that affordable housing developers are not seen by community members as benefiting from a less onerous planning assessment than any other developer would. In Port Phillip, Parramatta and Bluewater, there was a view from some interviewees that the planning process was a 'rubber stamp' either because the developer was also the approval authority, or because the council and developer had such a close relationship. There was no evidence of this in any of the case studies but the perception remained among some people. One issue that was raised time and again was the assessment and approval of government housing by SHAs. It is quite right for governments to argue that the income and occupancy type of residents in a proposed building are not issues for consideration in the planning assessment process. However, if it is the case that objectors should treat affordable housing no differently than market housing through the planning assessment process, then does it not hold that the planning assessment process for affordable housing should be the

same as that for market housing? The message from governments that the occupation and income of residents is not a planning issue seems to be at odds with a system that provides an alternative planning assessment track for dwellings that will only house assisted renters.

8.1.1 Key messages

→ Most affordable housing proposals are not particularly controversial, but the fierce and high-profile opposition to a small number of proposals can give the impression that affordable housing projects are universally opposed.

→ The extent of public consultation on an affordable housing proposal would seem to have some bearing on the level of formal opposition that the proposal encounters (more notification tends to increase the level of opposition).

→ Affordable housing developers generally prefer a fast-tracked planning assessment process but this need not mean less community involvement.

→ The level of opposition to affordable housing development tends to be greater in neighbourhoods that are affluent or aspirational, and where there is already anger and/or fear in the community.

→ Policy initiatives need support from both state and local government if they are to be effective and to stand the test of time. Where different tiers of government have policy frameworks that are contradictory, this gives people another reason to object to affordable housing development.

→ Community members believe they have the right to comment on proposed changes in their area, and they are often angry and resentful when they do not have this opportunity, or where there is little information on what that proposal will ultimately constitute. This can generate both fear and resentment, often intensifying and spreading opposition to an affordable housing proposal.

→ Varied planning assessment processes for affordable housing proposals, particularly where they are confusing, can generate anger and suspicion among community members.

8.2 What are the stated and unstated factors underlying community opposition to affordable housing projects?

In total, the research team analysed 727 submissions made by community members against affordable housing proposals in the case studies between 2006 and 2011. Table 21 shows the most common concerns raised by community members in those submissions. Of course, comments in submissions are only a proxy for concerns about affordable housing development, but we could triangulate them against data from interviews, interview-surveys and media accounts. These other sources of empirical data generally supported the findings from submissions analysis. However, interview data did also suggest that fears about the types of people living in the proposed affordable housing projects may have been understated in submissions data, actually being more widespread than the submissions data suggests.

Table 21: Concerns raised in formal submissions made against affordable housing proposals in Parramatta, Port Phillip and Brisbane, from a total of 727 submissions. Table shows the proportion of submissions in which each concern was raised

Concerns	Parramatta	Port Phillip	Brisbane	Total
Parking/traffic	84%	84%	85%	84%
Physical form/density	73%	50%	63%	64%
'Out of character'	62%	55%	29%	56%
Amenity (privacy, shadowing etc.)	72%	31%	61%	56%
Safety/crime	40%	3%	42%	31%
Planning process	43%	9%	22%	29%
Management of property	40%	3%	24%	25%
Type of residents/disadvantage	24%	7%	34%	18%
Environmental issues (trees, infrastructure)	12%	19%	20%	15%
Property values	15%	6%	22%	13%
Transiency of residents	20%	3%	5%	12%
Antisocial behaviour	3%	19%	5%	9%
Number of submissions analysed	401	267	59	727

As shown in Table 21, parking and/or traffic featured as a concern in 84 per cent of all 727 submissions, far and away the issue most commonly raised. Most often this was to do with the perceived inadequacy of the proposed parking provision, with many submitters complaining that parking requirements for affordable housing should not be any lower than for market housing. Where developers had data to support their lower levels of parking provision, these were often not trusted by community members. The regularity with which parking and traffic were raised as issues could also be to do with the types of issue that they are. Residents drive down their street every day and can draw on anecdotal evidence to support their view that the proposed parking provision is inadequate; they are an expert on parking in a way that they may not be on issues such as design, planning process and crime.

The next three most common concerns raised—physical form, character and amenity—mostly concerned the form and appearance of the proposed buildings (albeit that character also had social meaning, see Chapter 4). Concerns about amenity are most likely to come from immediate neighbours whose properties may be directly affected by issues to do with overlooking and shadowing from the new building. Often the concerns raised by submitters regarding physical form were reasonable and many were addressed by developers through changes in project design. In Parramatta, many concerns about physical change were linked to the way that proposals could comply with the A-SEPP provisions, while contravening local planning controls.

Concerns about safety and a potential increase in crime were raised in just under one-third of all submissions, often closely linked to the types of people who would be living in a project. In the minds of submitters in Parramatta, there was a link between boarding houses and crime: of the 162 submissions in Parramatta in which crime and safety were raised as concerns, 139 (86%) of these were made against boarding house proposals. The same was true of issues to do with antisocial behaviour and transiency, which were most often raised with regard to boarding house proposals.

Boarding houses would seem to be particularly objectionable to community members in Parramatta, despite the fact that our interview-survey data suggests that almost no neighbours living close to two new boarding houses had noticed any effect from their development (Chapter 7). Fears about safety and crime were far less pronounced in Port Phillip than in the other two case studies, although many more people were concerned about potential increases in antisocial behavior.

The planning process itself was an issue raised in 29 per cent of submissions across the three cities, although this was heavily skewed by the findings from Parramatta, where the A-SEPP was seen by submitters to be violating their rights and not providing a legitimate planning assessment process. These planning issues were far less commonly raised by submitters in Port Phillip and Brisbane, although even here there were some comments made about the perceived favouritism of local councils towards affordable housing developers, with both the City of Port Phillip and the City of Brisbane seen by some to be too close to those developers.

Issues with the people who would be living in the affordable housing, particularly their socio-economic status, were raised in just under 20 per cent of all submissions. The data split shows that concerns about the type of people that would live in projects were far less commonly raised in Port Phillip, than in Parramatta or Brisbane. As we mentioned above, however, the interviews, interview-surveys and analysis of media accounts suggests that this 20 per cent figure may not be an accurate reflection of the reality, with these other data sources tending to position the type of residents as a principal concern for objectors (albeit an oft-unstated one). What this might mean is that people are aware that they will achieve little traction with planning officers or politicians by stating an objection to lower-income groups in a submission against a development proposal, knowing full well that this is not a planning issue. Equally, they may not wish to raise such issues in formal submissions in which they are identified by name and address.

It seems reasonable to conclude that while the types of people living in a project was raised as an issue in 18 per cent of all submissions across the three cities, it was also a concern for many additional objectors who did not raise it explicitly in their submission. 'Sophisticated' objectors (Stein 1996; Iglesias 2002) might have disguised their objection to affordable housing residents through reference to supposed problems that it would generate with parking or amenity, rather than specifically identifying the type of resident as their concern.

Issues to do with environment and infrastructure focused mostly on the loss of trees, the capacity of sewerage systems and potential flooding risks resulting from development. These were rarely the principal objections raised in a submission, and usually they were included as part of an extensive and multi-faceted objection letter where parking, physical form or types of residents were the key concerns.

Concerns about property values feature less frequently in community objections to affordable housing in Australian cities than they have in studies of community concerns about affordable housing development in US cities (National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty 1997; Galster et al. 2003). Even data from interviews and interview-surveys suggest that the potential effect of a proposal on property values was not a principal concern for more than a small proportion of objectors to affordable housing developments. However, we did frequently encounter an alternative economic argument against affordable housing development from objectors; many people in submissions and interview-surveys claimed that it was unfair that affordable housing residents were living, subsidised, in their neighbourhood because they, themselves, had worked hard to afford to live there.

Driving much community opposition to affordable housing proposals was anger and fear. People were angry that development was taking place, especially where they believed that the development would not have been permissible under local planning controls, and they often feared that said development would change their area for the worse. Anger and fear were sometimes generated by the planning policy framework in place, see above, but they were exacerbated by confusion about what affordable housing was and prejudice against its residents. Our discussions with various objectors revealed that many, if not most, people believed that all affordable housing was public housing, and they associated both affordable housing and public housing with high-rise tower blocks and large public housing estates at the urban fringe.

This mirrors the findings of studies in the US of (mis)understandings and perceptions of affordable housing (Koebel et al. 2004; Goetz 2008). Most community members in the case studies had a negative image of affordable housing and saw its introduction to their neighbourhood as a potential problem. They argued that affordable housing projects generated crime and social dysfunction, often supporting this with evidence from their own visits to public housing properties or negative media coverage. If a community member already has a negative perception of affordable housing, it is much easier for someone to convince them to participate in community opposition to an affordable housing proposal than it is to convince them that they should not.

The most passionate objectors to affordable housing proposals valued their streets or neighbourhoods as they were. They feared that development would diminish these positive attributes, while generating new problems. Aside from routine technical issues to do with parking, amenity and environment and infrastructure, the majority of objections to the introduction of new and different types of buildings, people and behaviours were fundamentally about protecting a 'place' from undesirable change; the proposal was seen to be 'out of place' and the opposition was place-protective action (Devine-Wright 2009). Most of these people weren't objecting to affordable housing out of spite for government, they were objecting to a form of proposed development that they really believed would change their area for the worse. Addressing such concerns involves harnessing that passion for place, giving people some ownership of the new development, understanding their concerns and seeing whether their input can improve outcomes. It also requires that negative perceptions of affordable housing and affordable housing residents be shifted. We discuss the various ways in which all of this might be achieved in the next chapter.

If negative perceptions of affordable housing are to be tempered by positive messages, it is necessary to understand where they come from. In data from interviews, submissions and interview-surveys, negative perceptions of affordable housing seemed to come from four main sources:

1. Negative media coverage of public housing estates and affordable housing. In cases such as Parramatta where opposition to affordable housing development featured frequently in the local media, the fact that other local people—sometimes including the local council—were opposing such developments gave people the impression that affordable housing was a problem. Some objectors also identified television drama series from overseas as the source of their concerns.

2. First-hand experience of affordable housing properties that they believed were problematic. Often these people referred to large areas of public housing, either within the local area or elsewhere in their city. However, many people also referred to their own personal experience with individual residents of affordable housing—noisy neighbours, garbage on the street and burglaries for instance.

3. Accounts of public housing that had been verbally communicated to a person by an acquaintance of theirs. Often these accounts had come from people who were attempting to canvass support for an opposition campaign.

4. Independent investigation. In Mitchelton, community activists had actively gone out and sought stories of problems in other affordable housing projects, using these to alert neutral community members to the perceived threat and to add weight to their opposition campaign.

In general, people tended to pick up on the negative images of public housing available to them and assumed that this was what they could expect in their street or neighbourhood if the objectionable proposal was allowed to proceed; they feared the worst. There was a degree of selective perception among objectors whereby they would ignore positive or neutral stories about affordable housing and focus on negative accounts. A few community members participating in interviews and interview-surveys had something positive to say about affordable housing (mostly that recently-completed projects were more attractive than what they replaced), but most were neutral or perceived it negatively. It seemed that unless an affordable housing project was problematic, few people even knew that it was not market housing. This is an issue because it suggests that local examples of affordable housing projects which have neutral or positive effects on surrounding areas are usually not known to community members, while those generating problems are.

With few positive stories about social, or affordable, housing in the media and with a pervasive discourse of failure emanating from SHAs, it is easy to see how people might form a negative perception of those particular housing types, especially where they encountered scaremongering from local politicians or neighbours. Undoubtedly, such a negative perception of affordable housing also owes much to the way that the public housing sector has been residualised in Australia (Chapter 1), now housing a small proportion of the population and typically those with the most complex needs. In Chapter 9, we return to discuss issues of education and affordable housing image.

While community member perceptions of affordable housing were overwhelmingly negative in Parramatta and Brisbane, the empirical findings from Port Phillip suggest that there was significant support for affordable housing among sections of the community, as well as more widespread understanding of what affordable housing was and why it was important. Community support for the Kyme Place development, for instance, prompted a debate in the media about the development and it was clear that some residents were unhappy with the development while others were applauding the City of Port Phillip and PPHA for increasing affordable housing supply. In addition to the 267 submissions received in objection to nine affordable housing projects in Port Phillip, 76 letters of support were recorded. PPHA has been developing affordable housing in Port Phillip for many years and these findings suggest that, with time, it might be possible to generate community support for affordable housing and shift prejudice against it through positive local examples of projects that are not problematic.

8.2.1 Key messages

→ Parking and traffic, built form, neighbourhood amenity, planning process and the types of residents who would live in an affordable housing proposal were the most common causes for concern among objectors to affordable housing.

→ Objector concerns about the characteristics and behaviours of affordable housing residents seem likely to have been under-represented in submissions data because people are often not inclined to raise this in formal objections.

- → Fears about the effects of affordable housing development on property values did not seem to be a key driver of community opposition.

- → There was widespread confusion in the case studies about what affordable housing was, who lived in it and who managed it. Many, if not most, people believed that affordable housing was simply another name for public housing.

- → Most community members perceived of affordable housing negatively. These negative perceptions were based on media accounts, personal experience, anecdote and independent investigation.

- → There seemed to be significant support for affordable housing development in Port Phillip, albeit that large numbers of submissions against individual projects were often received from objectors.

8.3 How and why does community opposition to affordable housing development escalate?

The study's findings suggest that community opposition to affordable housing is usually short-lived and that the same tactics are adopted by objectors time and again.

On announcement of an affordable housing proposal, community members may become concerned about the potential impact on the area and decide to formally object. The opposition to the proposal will usually begin with objectors talking to planning officers, councillors and neighbours about their concerns, possibly also lodging a submission with planning authorities. If they are making no headway in their opposition, a small group of community members may form to add weight to the campaign and this group will actively seek to engage others in the opposition, for instance by asking them to sign a petition or make a submission.

If they are successful in gaining broader support, the number of submissions and the number of signatories on petitions will increase, possibly reaching a threshold point beyond which the local planning authority is required to hold a public meeting. The core group of objectors may also step up their campaign, lobbying politicians, contacting the media, staging public protests and perhaps hiring legal counsel. If the proposal becomes this controversial, planning decisions will probably be made by council politicians, rather than officers. This, in turn, raises the profile of the proposal and may make council members more fearful of the voter backlash if the controversial proposal is approved. If, after all this, objectors fail to gain traction with decision-makers, they may take their case to State or Federal politicians, or pursue legal action. The findings of the study suggest that the opposition tends to be most fierce and most widespread in its early stages, supporting findings from other studies (Dear 1992; Press 2009). As time passes that opposition usually subsides and often it will disappear altogether once a decision has been made by planning authorities.

Only in a small number of cases does community opposition to affordable housing escalate to gain political attention and/or media profile. The findings from interviews and content analysis suggest that there are six key contributing factors necessary for this escalation to occur. Our hypothesis is that a few of these six can be present in a place without the opposition escalating, but where all six are present, there are the conditions for a 'perfect storm'. Here, these six contributing factors are termed the 'six Ps'; prejudice, physical change, planning process, politics, provokers and profile.

1. *Prejudice* against potential residents of affordable housing was apparent across the case studies, with many people associating affordable housing residents with unproductivity, criminal activity and antisocial behaviour. Concerns like these about the characteristics and behaviours of future residents are more likely to make objectors feel that their personal safety and lifestyle are threatened by a

proposed development than would concerns about design and technical issues. This may mean that the objector's response is more emotional and driven by fear as much as by anger, possibly making their opposition more intense. Fears about the characteristics and behaviours of affordable housing residents also tend to be less geographically contained than those about design and technical issues. Because they potentially affect a wider area, the former may therefore attract broader attention than an issue with overlooking or shadowing.

2. Where a proposed affordable housing project involves the introduction of new built forms to an area, this *physical change* is often a key factor increasing community opposition to its development. Most proposals in the case study areas were higher in density than the buildings they replaced (and neighbouring properties), making them even more objectionable to community members and giving people another reason to object. Without physical change, few complaints can be raised by objectors through the planning process.

3. A recurring theme in all case studies was questions from objectors about the fairness of the *planning process*. Especially in Parramatta, but also in Port Phillip and Queensland, community angst was intensified by a belief that the assessment process for affordable housing wasn't sufficiently rigorous and favoured affordable housing developers. This generated distrust in, and resentment of, that planning process, and caused many community members to feel they were being treated unfairly. Together with physical change, these questions about the fairness of planning outcomes and processes can foster resentment and anger towards both government and developers.

4. In all case studies, *politics* was crucial to understanding how and why community opposition to affordable housing escalated. Local politicians are usually the decision-makers on controversial affordable housing proposals and they are often well connected and media savvy. Without the support of these politicians, objectors are likely to find it much harder to gain media coverage and their concerns are less likely to influence planning decision-making. In contrast, where objectors find that their own interests are aligned with those of politicians, they are more likely to see their campaign deliver results.

5. Often related to politics, the escalation of community opposition to affordable housing proposals also seems to be contingent on the presence of what we term *provokers*; key objectors who deliberately foment unrest among other community members and co-ordinate oppositional strategies and tactics. Across the case studies, we found that the most fierce and sustained opposition campaigns were driven by one or several provokers who wrote pro-forma submission letters, arranged petitions, visited the homes of neighbours to encourage them to participate in the opposition, lobbied local politicians and contacted the media. The skills of these provokers and the level and types of resources available to them often have a major bearing on the success or not of the opposition campaign. Without motivated provokers willing to devote time and effort to the campaign, opposition is likely to remain highly-localised.

6. The final 'P' is *profile*. Successful campaigns of opposition to affordable housing proposals are able to achieve media coverage and gain significant political traction. Once the opposition reaches the media, often by way of the involvement of politicians, it tends to spread and intensify as neutrals become fearful of affordable housing development and opportunists seize upon this. Without profile, it is more difficult and time-consuming for objectors to alert neutral community members to the opposition campaign and get them onside.

It seems to us that where and when these six Ps combine in a place, the conditions are right for an escalation of community opposition to affordable housing. Without

these Ps, opposition may still arise, but it is far less likely to escalate. The six Ps have quite different roles within the opposition. Prejudice, physical change and planning process (the first three Ps) generate the initial opposition from community members to an affordable housing proposal. However, it takes the last three (politics, provokers and profile) to escalate that opposition and to transform it from a localised concern into one of wider interest.

Another factor that seemed to escalate the opposition to affordable housing development, in some but not all cases, was a perception among objectors that governments, politicians and housing developers were simply dismissing their concerns as self-interested NIMBYism. There are links here to the literature on community opposition in the US, in which it has been argued that the labeling of opposition as short-sighted NIMBYism can operate as a means for governments to justify the removal or curtailment of democratic processes (Gibson 2005). For some community members, being labeled a NIMBY simply strengthened their resolve and drove them to oppose the development proposal even more forcefully.

8.3.1 Key messages

→ Opposition to affordable housing proposals is generally at its most fierce and most widespread early on, usually subsiding as time passes and disappearing once a decision on the controversial proposal has been made.

→ There are six key contributing factors that help transform an instance of opposition to affordable housing from a local to a wider concern. These six are prejudice, physical change, questions about the legitimacy of planning process, politics, provokers and profile.

→ A perception that governments, developers and politicians are dismissive of community concerns about affordable housing development can increase anger and resentment, intensifying the opposition.

8.4   What are the impacts of affordable housing development on host areas?

8.4.1 Experienced impacts on neighbours

A total of 154 interview-surveys were completed with householders in areas surrounding nine affordable housing projects in Parramatta that had been controversial when they were originally proposed in 2009, 2010 or 2011 (see Chapter 7). Eight of these had been completed and occupied. Of the 154 interview-surveys completed, 134 provided a definitive response to the questions about the overall effect of the controversial affordable housing development on the area, now that it had been completed. Table 18 shows the number and percentage of these 134 participants that had noticed negative effects. Of these 134, seven people (5%) had noticed positive effects, mostly to do with the attractive appearance of new buildings, friendly new neighbours or an improvement on what had been on the site before. Twenty-nine people (22%) had noticed negative effects, mostly to do with parking and traffic, noise, and the antisocial or criminal behavior of residents. Ninety-eight people (73%) had noticed little or no impact from the development.

Fifty-nine per cent of the participants who had noticed negative effects from the new developments lived around just two of the projects, with the other negative effects reported being spread thinly around the remaining six projects. Where just a few people had been negatively affected by the development, these few were often living in close proximity to the development. That is, the negative effects of development, where they existed, seemed rarely to have spilled over into the neighbourhood as a

whole. The two projects where a significant proportion of surveyed residents had noticed negative effects as a result of development were two of the largest (by number of units) in the sample and both were in areas in which the SHA had significant land holdings, and areas which many participants believed had declined in the last five years; what could be termed 'vulnerable' areas (Galster et al. 2003). Some of those with a negative view of the developments were affordable housing tenants themselves living in older detached houses. One of the most severely affected new neighbours, who had bought his house in the last five years, told us that he did not object at the planning stage because the council had told him they were powerless to do anything about it.

8.4.2 Quantitative impacts on property sales values

As part of this study, two hedonic models were run to test the influence of affordable housing development on property sales values in surrounding areas. The first hedonic model focussed on the impact of affordable housing developments on property sales values at different levels of proximity (100 metres, 200 metres, 300 metres etc.), while the second looked at the impact of individual affordable housing projects on nearby property sales values (Chapter 7). In the first model, proximity to affordable housing development was found to have had a generally positive impact on property sales values, although that impact was minimal. In the second model, the impact of individual affordable housing projects on property sales values was not universally positive or negative, and was minimal in either case. These findings echo those of many similar studies undertaken in the United States (Ellen 2007; Ellen et al. 2007; Nguyen et al. 2012).

Even where proximity to affordable housing was found to have a statistically significant impact on property sales values in surrounding areas, this relationship was more likely explained by spatial variations in dwelling types within the 500 metres buffer area and by other contextual factors to do with proximity to public transport, services and water frontages, rather than by proximity to an affordable housing project. We can conclude from our analysis that the development of affordable housing can have a small positive or negative impact on property sales values in surrounding areas up to a distance of 500 metres away, but that these impacts, where they exist, will be minimal and are likely to be outweighed by other factors to do with the characteristics of the property and its location.

8.4.3 Perceptions of host area

In a couple of case studies, interviewees revealed that the community opposition to affordable housing development had brought unintended consequences for their area:

→ Interviewees suggested that Mitchelton's community was now viewed by the development industry as militant. We were told that some developers (not just affordable housing developers) are reluctant to build there because they foresee opposition from community members that will result in costly delays. The opposition in Mitchelton was driven by businesspeople who were not anti-development and did not wish to discourage other developers in this way.

→ In Bluewater, some community members had apparently been resistant to the idea of campaigning against the proposed affordable housing project because they feared that such a campaign would lead to the area becoming associated with affordable housing, potentially turning private investors away.

It seems that objectors who seek to escalate their opposition to an affordable housing proposal run the risk that this will ultimately turn other developers away from the area and/or lead to the area itself becoming associated with affordable housing.

8.4.4 Community integration

Not only do our findings suggest that affordable housing development has little influence on property sales values, they also suggest that most people living close to recently-completed affordable housing developments in Parramatta have noticed little or no effect from their development. Notwithstanding this, the type of opposition witnessed in our four case studies potentially puts the people who end up living in these controversial affordable housing projects in an unhappy position: knowing full well that their neighbours and elected officials would prefer them not to be living there, they may understandably feel unwelcome. Being aware that neighbours opposed the development of the building in which you live, possibly because of their prejudice, would certainly make integration into the community more challenging.

In Bluewater, one single father apparently rejected the offer of accommodation in the new affordable housing project because he feared that the neighbours would look down on his family because of their housing tenure. As a happy counterpoint to this, interviewees in Mitchelton told us that people who had fiercely opposed the Blackwood Street affordable housing project have become friends with some of its occupants, now that it has been occupied for several years.

8.4.5 Key messages

→ One-hundred and thirty-four people participated in post-entry interview-surveys around eight recently-completed affordable housing projects in Parramatta. Twenty-two per cent had noticed negative effects from development, 78 per cent had not.

→ Most negative effects identified by participants in interview-surveys were to do with parking, and to a lesser extent antisocial behaviour, crime and amenity.

→ The findings of the hedonic modelling exercise suggest that the impact of proximity to affordable housing on property sales values can be positive or negative, but that it is likely to be minimal either way and to be outweighed by other factors to do with the characteristics of the property and its location. The development of affordable housing will not necessarily negatively impact property values in surrounding areas.

→ We found no correlation between the type of effect (positive or negative) that an affordable housing project had on property sales values and the number of dwellings in that project.

→ High-profile community opposition to an affordable housing proposal can have the effect of discouraging private investment in an area.

→ Community opposition to an affordable housing proposal can put future residents in a position where they feel unwelcome or stigmatised.

8.5 Summary

This chapter has addressed the study's first four research questions, bringing together the findings reported in Chapters 4–7 and considering what those findings tell us about the phenomenon of community opposition to affordable housing. The chapter has shed light on the policy and housing market context for community opposition to affordable housing in Australia, the factors that underlie that opposition, the strategies and tactics of objectors to affordable housing, the reasons that opposition campaigns escalate in some cases but not others, and the extent to which people's concerns about affordable housing do (or do not) eventuate. In the next chapter, we go on to consider what practical implications the research findings might have for policy-

makers and developers as they seek to mitigate or address community opposition to affordable housing development.

9 MITIGATING AND ADDRESSING COMMUNITY OPPOSITION TO AFFORDABLE HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

This chapter provides recommendations for developers and governments on possible strategies for mitigating and addressing community opposition to affordable housing development. It draws from the study's empirical findings (Chapters 4–7) and from the literature review (Chapter 2). The chapter directly addresses the study's fifth research question: how can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated and addressed through policy measures and practical steps? It is split into two parts; what affordable housing developers can do; and what governments can do. Clearly, however, the chances of mitigating or addressing community opposition to affordable housing development are greatest where developers and governments work together.

9.1 What can affordable housing developers do?

9.1.1 Pre-application stage

Get positive messages out from the bottom-up and top-down: a lack of understanding of affordable housing and a widespread misconception that affordable housing means high-rise public housing for welfare-recipients were seen by interviewees to be factors contributing to community push-back where it occurred. Affordable housing needs to be re-cast as an essential public good. If such a change in image is to be achieved, however, it will need to come from the bottom-up, as well as from the top-down. Many objectors do not trust representatives of governments and affordable housing developers who tell them that a proposed development will have no negative impact on their area. If these people are to be convinced that a proposed affordable housing proposal will not have damaging effects on their neighbourhood, this message will therefore also need to come from sources other than governments and the developer. As with the negative perceptions of affordable housing discussed in the previous chapter (Section 8.2), positive perceptions of affordable housing among members of the public could potentially be shaped by information from several sources:

1. Media coverage: Jacobs et al. (2011) discuss the ways in which negative associations of social housing tenants are often fuelled by unsympathetic media portrayals. However, they also identify strategies for challenging those current practices. They note that local newspapers can be an important way of challenging negative perceptions of social housing by promoting more positive narratives at a local level, albeit that the audience of these outlets is small. Other strategies can be for community stakeholders and/or affordable housing providers to foster relationships with mainstream media outlets and undergo media training.

2. First-hand experience and anecdote. In this study's empirical work, people's negative perceptions of affordable housing were often found to be related to their own personal experiences or to stories they had been told by acquaintances. For this to change, community members must become aware of well-managed and trouble-free affordable housing projects. NFP providers will play a key role in transforming perceptions in this way; establishing positive reputations, one community at a time, demonstrating to community members that they have a stake in the community and are here for the long-term. Tours of existing projects and informal meet-and-greets between prospective neighbours and residents of affordable housing will be important, as will regular face-to-face interaction between developers and community members, and accessible points of contact for community members who encounter problems with any project. In Port Phillip, PPHA have successfully built such a reputation, as evidenced by the many letters

of support received through the planning assessment process (Chapter 5). As part of the development application process, community engagement can be a means of getting these positive messages out from the bottom up, rather than being seen by developers as a necessary hurdle to overcome.

3. Promotional campaigns. We believe that a more strategic approach to improving the image of affordable housing is necessary, see Section 9.2.

Build relationships with decision-makers: given that much of the opposition to affordable housing development in the case studies came from local politicians, representatives from NFP providers explained to us that educating councillors and planning officers was a key strategy for them at present. Giving presentations and running information sessions for council officers and politicians was helping them gain buy-in and support for their work, also making their organisations better known, trusted and anchoring them in the local area. Key messages to get out to local politicians and planning officers were that many local people needed affordable housing and that not all affordable housing was for very low-income groups: that many people working at their council would be eligible for affordable housing managed through a NFP housing provider. Obtaining the support of decision-makers, be they planning officers or local politicians, can be the crucial factor influencing the outcome of planning assessment. As Iglesias (2002) notes, it is crucial to know your audience; some decision-makers will be convinced by the economic arguments for an affordable housing project, others will be more receptive to arguments about social justice.

Think about locational strategy: there are some areas where there would be fierce opposition to affordable housing development no matter how well the community engagement and design process was managed. Data from interviews and submissions suggest that it is in affluent and aspirational areas where opposition to an affordable housing proposal is most likely, reflecting findings from overseas (Dear 1992; Galster et al. 2003). Also reflecting international findings, opposition to affordable housing seems to be most widespread and fiercest among those residents living closest to a development site (Schively 2007). Galster et al. (2003) find that scattered affordable housing development in the US, especially in low-poverty neighbourhoods, has no impact on surrounding property values, but that higher concentrations of affordable housing projects within a locality can produce negative externalities. In Chapter 7, we found that small affordable housing developments in Brisbane had not harmed property sales values in surrounding areas. In this sense, it would seem advisable to spread affordable housing development evenly, avoiding over-concentration. A pragmatic view would be that developers of affordable housing should look to develop projects in as diverse a range of neighbourhoods as possible within their areas of operation, but should exercise caution (especially where they have limited resources and no self-assessment powers) about developing in certain types of areas, especially those where there is no precedent for affordable housing development or multi-unit development, where the community is socio-economically homogenous, wealthy and militant, where there are few renters, where development advocates from that community (e.g. politicians or community groups) cannot be found, or where an area is seen by its residents to be on the cusp of decline.

Do your research: developers should gather information on current local planning policies and controls, decision-making processes and timing, the backgrounds and persuasions of the people that will ultimately make the decision (e.g., local politicians), and information about five critical audiences or forums: local government staff and decision-makers, potential supporters, potential objectors, the media and the courts (Iglesias 2002). Establish a group of key stakeholders comprising staff of the developer, project collaborators like architects, and trusted allies, especially those that

know the neighbourhood, local politics and the media. This planning group can then assemble information on the potential impact of a development on neighbours and their likely response, as well as the angle that local media outlets might take and the possible supporters and opponents of the affordable housing proposal in the community and among decision-makers (who is likely to vote against this proposal, who is likely to support it?). Such a process can allow developers to plan ahead for any eventualities, for instance by allowing them to establish possible concessions that could be made to objectors or by building a convincing argument in support of the development should it be opposed. This can help prevent a situation arising where developers are forced to respond to opposition without having prepared for it.

Recruit supporters: think about whose views will influence decision-makers and try to recruit them as advocates of the project. If decision-makers are local politicians, they may be influenced by resident groups, local Chambers of Commerce, businesspeople or affordable housing advocacy groups. Once supporters have been recruited, they can provide political intelligence, lobby decision-makers, recruit and organise supporters, perform outreach to objectors, be public spokespeople, or testify at legal hearings (Iglesias 2002). Through this study, we became aware of politicians in Sydney and Melbourne who had performed this advocacy role, helping to get affordable housing proposals through the planning assessment process. At the focus group, we also asked existing affordable housing residents whether, hypothetically, they would consider becoming advocates of affordable housing developers and going out to meet objectors where opposition had been encountered to a development proposal. They said that they would be happy to perform such a role.

Identify possible ringleaders: in most of the cases in this study where opposition to affordable housing proposals became high profile, this seemed to be driven and co-ordinated by one or several key community leaders, referred to as 'provokers' in Chapter 8; often those people living closest to the proposal, local politicians and political aspirants. If developers are able to identify these key community leaders early on in the process and engage them genuinely in discussions around the proposal and its value, including the opportunity for negotiation, there is potential for their concerns to be alleviated or addressed and for development outcomes to be improved. Where these key community leaders can be brought onside as development advocates, there is also the chance that they will spread positive messages about the development proposal to other community members through social networks, with this positive publicity likely to be trusted by others in the community because it comes from someone with no vested interest in the proposal. As well as residents, community and religious leaders or businesspeople from the area, local politicians are another group that can be extremely useful for proponents to have as advocates.

Consider establishing a community steering committee: Hogan (1996) suggests that where a proposal is likely to encounter opposition, a board of key stakeholders (for instance local residents, community groups, businesses, developers, government agencies) can be established and maintained throughout the development process in order to facilitate co-operation, provide oversight and resolve any conflicts that arise. However, we are cautious about advocating such an approach because the presence of a committee such as this may slow the design and development process and ultimately lead to too many compromises being made.

9.1.2 Development application stage

Make sure the first conversation is with local politicians: speaking to local politicians at an early stage can help developers predict the response that is likely from local residents and businesses. Getting a politician onside at an early stage also reduces the likelihood that opposition to a project will escalate and can help spread positive

messages about the development and organisation. Making local politicians supporters of a proposal is often an effective strategy because many community members will go to their local politician with any concerns that they have. If that politician is able to discuss with them the merits of the proposal and communicate positive messages about it, people's fears may be allayed. Local politicians are also the decision-makers on many proposals (especially controversial ones), so getting their support can be crucial in achieving a successful planning assessment outcome.

Keep it simple: what came out of interviews in all of the case studies was a view that if an affordable housing developer wishes to reduce the likelihood that an affordable housing proposal will be opposed by community members, they should ensure that their proposal meets as many of the requirements of local planning controls as possible. If, for instance, a development proposal meets all requirements for parking, physical form and impact on neighbourhood amenity, opponents of that proposal would only be able to object on the basis that the future residents of the building or their behaviours would be undesirable, or that their property values would be harmed. The latter concerns are not planning issues and planners can deal with them as such. Much of the anger among objectors in the case studies centred on the perceived inappropriateness of proposed physical forms and the idea that they somehow violated local planning controls. In cases where affordable housing proposals conform with local planning controls, community members are provided with one less reason to object. The basic principle here for developers is to minimise the range of reasons that a community member can object to a proposal: don't allow people to cloak their concerns about affordable housing residents in issues to do with parking provision or physical form. In addition, if it can be demonstrated by developers that an affordable housing proposal contributes to broader council policies or strategies, that proposal is more likely to be supported and/or defended by local politicians.

Pro-actively engage community members: rather than attempting to 'fly under the radar', some NFP developers actively sought to engage local community members in schematic project design. This approach was sometimes taken because of the difficulties that developers had experienced in the past with opposition to affordable housing projects. It was seen to be a way of reducing planning delays by addressing any potential concerns for neighbours before the final development application was lodged with planning authorities, while also making proposals more context-responsive and getting potential objectors onside. Emphasis in these engagement efforts was on community members living closest to the development site. Additional outreach may also come in the form of public meetings, door knocking, individual meetings with local leaders, or open house sessions. The additional outreach risks stirring things up, but a lack of outreach may lead to criticism from community members and decision-makers. Face-to-face interpersonal interaction between developers and community members should be maximised wherever possible.

Listen: in the case studies, the unreceptive attitudes of development proponents, local politicians and government officers to the views expressed by community members were often identified as a major factor contributing to their anger and resentment, sometimes strengthening their resolve. In contrast, many NFP developers told us that having face-to-face meetings with objectors helped reduce anger and fear about development proposals. Giving affordable housing developers a human face seems to be an effective strategy for addressing opposition to affordable housing where it does occur, making people feel that someone does care and that the proposed project will be responsibly managed. An antagonistic relationship between governments, developers and community members about a development proposal is not in anyone's interests, least of all the people who will ultimately live at the project.

Be willing to negotiate: another key strategy for providers in mitigating local opposition to affordable housing development can be to enter the development process with a willingness to negotiate with community members on issues that do relate to planning issues. Listening to people's concerns at an early stage and being prepared to make changes to design or parking provision in response to them is likely to foster a more amicable relationship and can go some way to reducing the opposition and establishing a positive long-term relationship. As Iglesias (2002) points out, it is best that developers of affordable housing plan for these concessions early on, so that additional costs can be factored in. Some NFP housing developers in Victoria have been able to mitigate community opposition to their developments by beginning their community engagement efforts with a statement from senior officers that the characteristics of occupants is not up for debate, but that the design of the building most certainly is. This sets the parameters for any discussions that follow.

Be forthcoming with information: based on the findings from our case studies, it would certainly appear that a lack of community consultation on development proposals has the potential to generate and intensify both resentment and fear among community members: not only do opponents ask 'why haven't I been told what's going on?', they also ask 'what are they trying to hide from me?'.

While it is possible to 'fly under the radar' with community engagement in some cases, the risk with such an approach is that the opposition to a project will be all the more fierce if it does arise, at least partly because people object to not having been consulted (there seems to be a widespread expectation among community members that they should be consulted on development proposals). There is an opportunity for providers of affordable housing, particularly for locally-based NFP providers, to build up a relationship with community members whereby they become trusted and valued stakeholders in the community. Actively getting positive messages out about the organisation and a development proposal before opposition can emerge is a way of demonstrating goodwill and growing this relationship, while also contributing to an improved understanding of affordable housing and reducing fear and uncertainty in the community. Crucially, it can also remove the opportunity for mischievous objectors to spread rumours and mount smear campaigns about a proposal or an organisation.

9.2 What can governments do?

9.2.1 Policy development

Ensure policy compatibility: as we saw in Parramatta (Chapter 4), state government affordable housing policies that cut across local policies or controls may be resisted by councils and can be confusing and frustrating for the community members they affect. A high level of compatibility between state and local level policies is desirable, not least because there is the potential for the fairness and legitimacy of policies to be questioned where they seem to contravene other policies that have been developed and adopted through democratic processes. As discussed above, the basic aim must be to minimise the number of planning issues that can be raised by objectors with respect to a particular affordable housing proposal.

Promote engagement in policy development: the chance of an affordable housing policy initiative being understood and supported by other government agencies and community members is far greater where those groups have had a genuine chance to contribute to its design. Co-operation between local and state government is particularly important in this respect, especially where changes to planning controls are involved and where local governments are responsible for implementing a state government policy (as with the A-SEPP in NSW).

Develop parking standards for affordable housing: parking and traffic were the most commonly raised concerns for objectors to affordable housing proposals in all three states. Objectors frequently argued that too little parking had been provided in a development proposal, especially where parking provision was less than minimum requirements for market housing in council planning controls. Where developers have formulae for estimating parking need, objectors often question their validity or neutrality. This suggests a need for a specific set of parking standards for affordable housing, probably best set, following studies, by local governments. This would potentially mean that developers of affordable housing could provide fewer parking spaces than a private developer, while still meeting council parking requirements. That would then be another issue that people could not object to.

9.2.2 Planning assessment

Involve community members in development assessment: levels of community engagement for SHI projects were often more limited than they would have been under normal council processes, with this driven primarily by the tight timelines imposed by the Australian Government. In Queensland and Parramatta, there was considerable anger and resentment from some community members at the perceived inadequacy of the consultation process for affordable housing proposals. This gave them an additional reason to object to projects that they did not want in their area.

The reduced levels of community engagement were said by interviewees to have been necessary in order to meet the timelines of the SHI. The argument here was that any additional community engagement, beyond notification of council and adjoining properties, would potentially have resulted in delays that meant Federal timelines simply could not be met: the lack of community engagement was regrettable but unavoidable. The period in which the SHI was introduced was extraordinary and an impending economic downturn and the need for new affordable housing dwellings were seen to be sufficient justification for reduced community involvement in planning decision-making. However, perhaps more should have been made of the fact that the SHI was part of a broader effort by the Federal Government to prevent economic recession; people may have been less hostile to new affordable housing development if they had been made aware of its benefits and had heard Prime Minister Rudd explain the purpose of the SHI. Objectors to affordable housing who participated in this research did not seem aware of the economic benefits of the SHI, which suggests that these messages were not being communicated effectively by governments.

If there is to be no formal consultation by assessment authorities on development proposals that are seen by them to conform with existing local planning controls, it is imperative that the development of the latter planning controls have been shaped by extensive community engagement processes (with emphasis on ensuring that the full range of community members have been made aware of the types of development that they can expect for the area in future years). Such a process also provides an opportunity to educate people about the need for affordable housing and to get input on planning directions for an area from the people who know it best. If a streamlined assessment process is sought by governments or developers, it should only be applied in cases where it has been preceded by upfront engagement on broader planning directions for the area. The foreshadowed changes to the planning system in NSW would provide an opportunity for this front-loaded community engagement.

A study of community attitudes towards community consultation in SE Queensland in 2011 (Harbinger Consultants 2011) revealed a significant degree of frustration and negativity regarding consultation processes. Many respondents in the study described consultation processes that they had been involved in as tokenistic, with consulters simply going through the motions and not following up with community members on

any changes that had (or had not) been made in the light of the views that had been expressed. Although the sample size for the study was quite small (220 respondents) and would have inevitably been skewed towards those who are active in community life and/or have grievances regarding consultation processes, these would also seem to be the very people who are most likely to join residents groups and participate in opposition campaigns against unwanted development proposals. Certainly, many of the views expressed by participants in the Harbinger research were echoed by the community members we spoke to from the case studies across all three states.

Recognise that community opposition can lead to improved development outcomes: many objections to affordable housing development in the case studies were reasonable and community opposition in some of them was seen by the research team to have improved development outcomes. Planning officers, advocate groups and affordable housing developers should avoid dismissing or ignoring resident concerns, as this can simply generate increased hostility and resentment, strengthening community resolve. Labelling opponents as NIMBYs, especially in the media, invariably seems to increase hostility and make it more difficult to reach an amicable agreement, removing the potential for constructive negotiation.

The strength of feeling evident in submissions data illustrates that although there is undoubtedly much prejudice against affordable housing residents, there is also seen to be a lot at stake for objectors. Many objectors have all their wealth tied up in their home and they fear that their neighbourhood will deteriorate as a result of new development. Often these fears will have been heightened by the actions and scaremongering tactics of other community members, including local politicians. A lack of information about who will live in or manage the properties and a lack of agency for community members through the planning assessment process increases their anxieties, often leading them to object. By ignoring or dismissing community concerns as self-interested NIMBYism, proponents risk damaging any chance they have of building an ongoing relationship with local community members and may also foster resentment of the people who will ultimately end up living in the project.

Consider whether affordable housing and market housing should have separate planning assessment tracks: representatives from the Queensland Government quite rightly argued that if local planning controls permit residential uses in an area within certain physical parameters, then it makes no difference if those residential uses are developed for low-income or high-income occupants. However, would the same logic not hold that all housing developments, irrespective of proponent or occupant, should go through the same planning assessment process? As we discussed above, an argument that the income of occupants is not a planning issue is at odds with a system that provides an alternative track of planning assessment for dwellings that will only be occupied by low-income groups.

9.2.3 Public relations

Improve education and the image of affordable housing: it was clear from interviews with the various stakeholders in the case studies that affordable housing as a concept was not well understood and that many local politicians and planning officers did not distinguish between different forms of affordable housing. Education for council staff, politicians and community members is desperately needed, particularly to stress that there are a range of people living in affordable housing, from very low income to moderate income. Another key message is about the number of people in housing need, at local area levels. Governments and affordable housing developers must also be more aggressive in getting positive messages out about affordable housing when there is opposition to a proposal from local community members. The coverage of cases of opposition in the media overwhelmingly focuses on the various issues of

contention for community members, from their perspective, rather than on the benefits of, and need for, affordable housing. Partly this is because the opposition makes a better story (Jacobs et al. 2011). Governments and affordable housing advocates must look at how positive messages about affordable housing can be used to cut across opposition arguments, as we discussed above, they must do more than just label opponents of affordable housing as self-interested NIMBYs and dismiss their concerns. Getting buy-in from local politicians, many of whom are frequent commentators in the media, is one way to get these messages out effectively: make affordable housing part of their agenda and they will do the rest.

At present, affordable housing seems to be foremost associated by members of the public with high-rise tower blocks and dysfunctional suburban estates, with streets full of rubbish and burnt out cars, and with residents exhibiting antisocial and criminal behaviours. These negative perceptions of affordable housing cannot be shifted overnight and must be tackled from both the top down and bottom up.

As mentioned in Section 9.1, we believe that further research could and should be undertaken on possible promotional strategies for affordable housing. At present, the promotion of affordable housing tends to be done in a haphazard way in Australia, by some developers and some governments but not by all. We believe a more considered, more professional and more strategic approach is necessary if widespread negative perceptions of affordable housing are to be shifted. Further research could bring together experts and identify possible promotional strategies, with governments and developers then contributing financially to a single campaign from which they all benefit.

Many people, however, will ignore or dismiss the messages communicated by governments through publicity campaigns as they see those governments as having a vested interest. For this reason, we believe that government efforts should also be directed at educating and winning over politicians, planners and community leaders. These groups can then be responsible for communicating positive messages about affordable housing at the level of local communities. In addition, people's own positive experiences of visiting or living near unproblematic affordable housing projects will inevitably influence their perceptions of affordable housing. Here, NFP housing organisations will play a crucial role by providing positive examples of best practice on the ground, beginning to shift negative perceptions of affordable housing one community at a time. Chapter 5 shows how this has begun to work in practice.

Consider changes to terminology: there was a suggestion in many interviews and in the focus group that affordable housing is a problematic term, conjuring images of dysfunctional public housing estates. Goetz (2008) found that low-cost housing described as 'affordable housing' attracts more opposition than low-cost housing described as 'lifecycle housing'. However, it may be that a new term for affordable housing would be destined to become stigmatised with time, just like Housing Commission, public housing, social housing and affordable housing. We believe that the best way forward is for affordable housing to continue to be used (as it is in this report) in a broad sense to describe the range of government, NFP and market housing that is affordable to low and moderate income households (Gurran et al. 2007). With time, people will become aware that various different types of people live in affordable housing, some of whom receive welfare benefits, some of whom do not. If the research on promotional campaigns for affordable housing, mentioned above, was to be undertaken, however, the specific term used to describe low-cost housing should be a topic for discussion.

Support affordable housing developers: in Queensland and Parramatta, council politicians made life more difficult for both government and non-government affordable

housing developers, while the reverse was true in Port Phillip. The actions of Parramatta City Council (Chapter 4) and Brisbane Lord Mayor Campbell Newman (Chapter 6) were unhelpful in the extreme, and are in stark contrast to the City of Port Phillip which is probably the council in Australia that has done most to support affordable housing over the last 30 years, both at the level of officers and politicians. The City of Port Phillip provides an outstanding example of the difference that a strong policy commitment to affordable housing by a council can make to the level of affordable housing being delivered on the ground. Such a policy commitment provides politicians with a reason (or obligation) to support affordable housing development where it faces opposition from local community members.

9.2.4 Politics

Take politics out of the equation: in all of the case studies, community opposition to affordable housing became political, with the involvement of local politicians said by interviewees to have often been driven by a perceived opportunity for political gain. If politics could be taken out of the equation on a particular affordable housing policy direction, for instance through cross-party support for that direction, there would be less opportunity for the policy to be used for, and weakened by, political manoeuver.

Provide political support for affordable housing: if community objectors to affordable housing can be appeased by local politicians at an early stage, rather than aggravated by them, there is the potential for escalation of the opposition to be avoided. Appeasement might involve educating opponents about the need for affordable housing in the local area, talking them through the proposals, explaining who will live there, showing them other affordable housing projects, or providing them with contact details for the developer. It seems that the interaction between community members and local politicians is perhaps the single most important one in determining whether opposition to a proposed project will or will not escalate. When speaking to their local politician, community members in our case studies did not take it well when they felt they were being ignored or dismissed as ignorant or selfish. A key message from this study is that more local politicians should be encouraged and supported to make affordable housing part of their agenda.

9.2.5 Non-government affordable housing developers

Encourage the growth of the NFP housing sector: NFP housing providers can play a key role in shifting negative perceptions of affordable housing because they are often locally anchored and have a stake in the communities in which they operate, PPHA provides a case in point. Emphasis in policy-making should be on encouraging and enabling these NFP providers to expand their development functions, but also encouraging them to focus their efforts on specific geographical areas, so as to build up an on-going relationship with local communities. In this sense, moves by governments to grow the NFP housing sector may result, over time, in fewer affordable housing projects being opposed.

NRAS-type initiatives: the National Rental Affordability Scheme offers financial incentives to people, businesses and NFP organisations to build and rent dwellings to eligible low and moderate income households at a rate that is at least 20 per cent below market rent, for a minimum of 10 years (Australian Government no date). Some of our interviewees told us that private developers in Sydney are building new residential projects under standard council planning assessment processes and later applying for NRAS incentives to attach to certain dwellings within those projects. This means that 'affordable housing' is not mentioned at the planning assessment stage but that some of the properties in the project ultimately end up being used for affordable housing nevertheless. Interviewees told us that residents living close to

these projects usually had no idea they were living close to affordable housing properties because the NRAS incentives were only attached after development was complete. This is potentially an interesting model because it would seem, from our research, that the feared impact of affordable housing development is usually much greater than the actual impact. The dedication of certain properties in a recently-completed project for affordable housing, like this, would then seem to reduce the likelihood that the proposal will encounter opposition at the planning stage while having few (if any) negative impacts for neighbouring residents.

Private sector involvement in affordable housing development: the incentivisation of affordable housing development by for-profit developers under the NSW A-SEPP was a novel approach and met with mixed success. Interviewees told us that there was growing interest from private developers (especially smaller developers in middle ring Sydney suburbs) in the A-SEPP provisions throughout 2009 and 2010, but that the 2011 amendments had seriously damaged the credibility of the A-SEPP and removed many of its more appealing profit-making provisions. It is difficult to assess the impact of the A-SEPP overall, not least because these types of policies often take several years to bed in and the A-SEPP never had this chance. However, the sense from several interviewees, including private developers, was that many developers using the A-SEPP had lost money when the policy was amended in 2011, and that they no longer trusted the NSW Government because of this.

An unrelated suggestion from interviewees from the NFP sector was that the A-SEPP should have required all development applications for privately-financed affordable housing to be made in partnership with a NFP housing provider (with the NFP provider listed as applicant), which would have given community members greater certainty about who would manage and live in the properties. While many councils did require private developers to submit as part of their development application a letter of support from a NFP housing provider, this was seen by interviewees not to have been rigorous enough.

9.3   Summary

This chapter addressed the study's fifth research question: how can opposition to affordable housing development be mitigated and addressed through policy measures and practical steps? In this sense, it was the practical output of the research. The chapter was split into measures that affordable housing developers can take and measures that governments can take, but obviously community opposition to a proposal is least likely where developers and governments work together. What the chapter clearly shows is that there are many steps that can be taken by developers and governments to reduce the likelihood that an affordable housing proposal will be opposed by community members. For an affordable housing developer, following the steps we have outlined above may not guarantee that a proposal will not encounter some opposition from community members, but it will make opposition far less likely and it will reduce the intensity of any opposition that does arise. Almost all of the steps for minimising community opposition to affordable housing suggested in Section 9.1 can be implemented by developers immediately, or at least in the short-term. Priorities should be efforts to build relationships with politicians and local community members, while also ensuring that projects are built within existing planning controls and that negotiation with objectors on features of project planning and design remains a possibility. For governments, it may be more difficult to implement some of the measures suggested. However, we believe that policy compatibility and transparency are fundamental in reducing the opposition, and that they can easily be achieved. Perhaps more challenging and more important is obtaining support from council politicians and officers for affordable housing development; these groups must be

brought on-side as advocates of affordable housing rather than opponents. Finally, much further effort is needed from governments and developers if negative perceptions of affordable housing are to be shifted. A considered and strategic approach to promotion will be required, and one that works both from the bottom-up and the top-down.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Results of hedonic model for individual projects in Brisbane

Table A1: Results of hedonic model for Alderley Avenue, Alderley

	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coeff	T	Sig.	95.0 per cent Confidence Interval for B	
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
(Constant)	-107443.581	29740.115		-3.613	.000 ***	-165907.850	-48979.312
Lot size	122.145	25.742	.168	4.745	.000 ***	71.541	172.749
Bedrooms	96191.404	9778.008	.406	9.838	.000 ***	76969.417	115413.391
Bathrooms	49154.029	11666.360	.153	4.213	.000 ***	26219.847	72088.211
Off-street parking	76491.321	11297.350	.251	6.771	.000 ***	54282.554	98700.088
Distance to closest AHD	253.378	67.107	.131	3.776	.000 ***	121.457	385.298

Note: Adjusted R Square = 0.570; *** $P < 0.001$, Durbin-Watson = 1.635

Table A2: Results of hedonic model for Colton Avenue, Lutwyche

	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coeff	T	Sig.	95.0 per cent Confidence Interval for B	
	B	**Std. Error**	**Beta**			**Lower Bound**	**Upper Bound**
(Constant)	-112749.296	32227.207		-3.499	.001 *	-176227.031	-49271.562
Lot size	39.136	13.803	.111	2.835	.005 **	11.948	66.324
Bedrooms	108336.657	11249.880	.488	9.630	.000 ***	86177.837	130495.477
Bathrooms	58830.119	13372.556	.213	4.399	.000 ***	32490.277	85169.961
Off-street parking	86584.333	12648.186	.285	6.846	.000 ***	61671.278	111497.389
Distance to closest AHD	134.228	58.223	.090	2.305	.022 *	19.545	248.910

Note: Adjusted R Square = 0.632; * $P < 0.05$; ** $P < 0.01$; *** $P < 0.001$, Durbin-Watson = 1.6

Table A3: Results of hedonic model for Ryan Street, West End

	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coeff	T	Sig.	95.0 per cent Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	-273205.964	79609.224		-3.432	.001 *	-429934.542	-116477.386
Lot size	122.311	44.479	.113	2.750	.006 **	34.744	209.879
Bedrooms	253536.998	27942.141	.481	9.074	.000 ***	198526.638	308547.359
Bathrooms	76755.025	31712.857	.117	2.420	.016 *	14321.167	139188.882
Off-street parking	162111.216	33998.929	.243	4.768	.000 ***	95176.714	229045.719
Distance to closest AHD	-317.333	148.878	-.090	-2.131	.034 *	-610.433	-24.233

Note: Adjusted *R* Square = 0.553; * *P* < 0.05; ** *P* < 0.01; *** *P* < 0.001, Durbin-Watson = 1.648

Table A4: Results of hedonic model for Welsby Street, New Farm

	Unstd. Coefficients		Std. Coeff	T	Sig.	95.0 per cent Confidence Interval for B	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Lower Bound	Upper Bound
(Constant)	-916312.793	98854.546		-9.269	.000 ***	-1111107.281	-721518.304
Lot size	36.772	13.317	.107	2.761	.006 **	10.531	63.012
Bedrooms	301647.949	39327.869	.436	7.670	.000 ***	224151.745	379144.153
Bathrooms	103029.603	49438.027	.102	2.084	.038 *	5611.168	200448.039
Off-street parking	336674.358	55506.709	.303	6.065	.000 ***	227297.488	446051.229
Distance to closest AHD	1295.400	199.918	.255	6.480	.000 ***	901.459	1689.341

Note: Adjusted *R* Square = 0.700; * *P* < 0.05; ** *P* < 0.01; *** *P* < 0.001, Durbin-Watson = 1.857

Appendix 2: Copy of interview-survey

Project:
Address:

A. Living in the neighbourhood

1. When did you move into this house? _____ years ago
2. Is this house:
   1 Owned outright
   2 Have a mortgage
   3 Rented privately
   4 Rented through a housing provider
   5 Other
3. Do you live:
   1 By yourself
   2 With your spouse/partner
   3 With your family
   4 Other
4. How would you describe the character of your neighbourhood?

5. How would you say the neighbourhood's character has changed in the last 5 years?
   1 Much better
   2 Somewhat better
   3 Not at all
   4 Somewhat worse
   5 Much worse
   6 Not sure
6. In what ways has the character changed?

B. Local affordable housing project

7. We're particularly interested in the development of an affordable housing project at [location]. Are you aware of this project?
   1 Yes
   2 No
9. How did you first find out about this project?
   1 Public notice (from consent authority)
   2 Word of mouth
   3 Construction started
   4 The local newspaper
   5 Other
10. At the time, did you feel well informed about this project?
    1 Yes
    2 No
    3 Not sure

11. At the time, did you feel you were given a chance to have your say about this project?
    1 Yes
    2 No
    3 Not sure

C. Concerns about the project

12. Did you have any concerns about the project when you heard about it?
    1 Yes
    2 No
    3 Not sure
13. What were your concerns at the time?
    1 Decline in property values
    2 Increase local traffic / parking problems
    3 Noise
    4 Increased anti-social behaviour
    5 Increased crime in the area
    6 Personal and family safety
    7 The property would be managed
    8 Suitability of design
    9 Loss of privacy (overlooking)
    10 Not fit with neighbourhood character
    11 Other
14. How did you communicate your concerns?

Q14	Q15 (target audience)						Q16
---	Counc	MP	Staff	Media	Neigh	Other	Most effect
1 Verbal complaints							
2 Formal submission							
3 Petition							
4 Public meetings							
5 Other							

15. For each, who were you communicating with? (table)
16. If multiple, which method was most effective (table)
17. Did you communicate your concerns:
    1 By yourself
    2 With other neighbours
    3 Through a resident / neighbourhood organisation
    4 Other
18. If organised with others, how was it led (e.g. name of resident organisation) and how did you participate:

19. How well do you feel that your concerns were listened to?
    1 Not at all
    2 A little
    3 Some
    4 Mostly
    5 Completely
    6 Not sure
    Reason?

D. Effect of project

20. Last couple of questions. Now that it's complete, how would you describe the overall effect of the project?
    1 Completely negative
    2 Mostly negative
    3 No or little effect/impact
    4 Mostly positive
    5 Completely positive
21. If any, what have been the positive effects?
    1 New neighbours nicer
    2 Made new friends
    3 New building looks nice
    4 Project well run, improvement
    5 Other
22. If any, what have been the negative effects?
    1 Decline in property values
    2 Increase local traffic / parking problems
    3 Noise
    4 Increased anti-social behaviour
    5 Increased crime in the area
    6 Personal and family safety
    7 The property not well managed
    8 Suitability of design
    9 Loss of privacy (overlooking)
    10 Not fit with neighbourhood character
    11 Other
23. How would you rate the management of the project during its time of operation?
    1 Excellent
    2 Very good
    3 OK
    4 Unsatisfactory
    5 Poor
    6 Not sure
24. Any other comments you would like to make?

25. Finally, would you be interested in being contacted further as part of this research project? (record details)

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