



Australasian **Housing** Institute  
*Supporting housing professionals*

# HousingWORKS

The Journal of the Australasian Housing Institute – linking housing workers in Australia and New Zealand

Volume 11 • Number 4 • December 2016





# VALUING social housing

> The question of how we value the broad social benefits of providing safe and secure housing to those in need of assistance is important for making the case for more investment in social housing. Dr Judy Kraatz from Cities Research Centre at Griffith University gives us a progress report on recent research endeavouring to provide a framework for making this case.

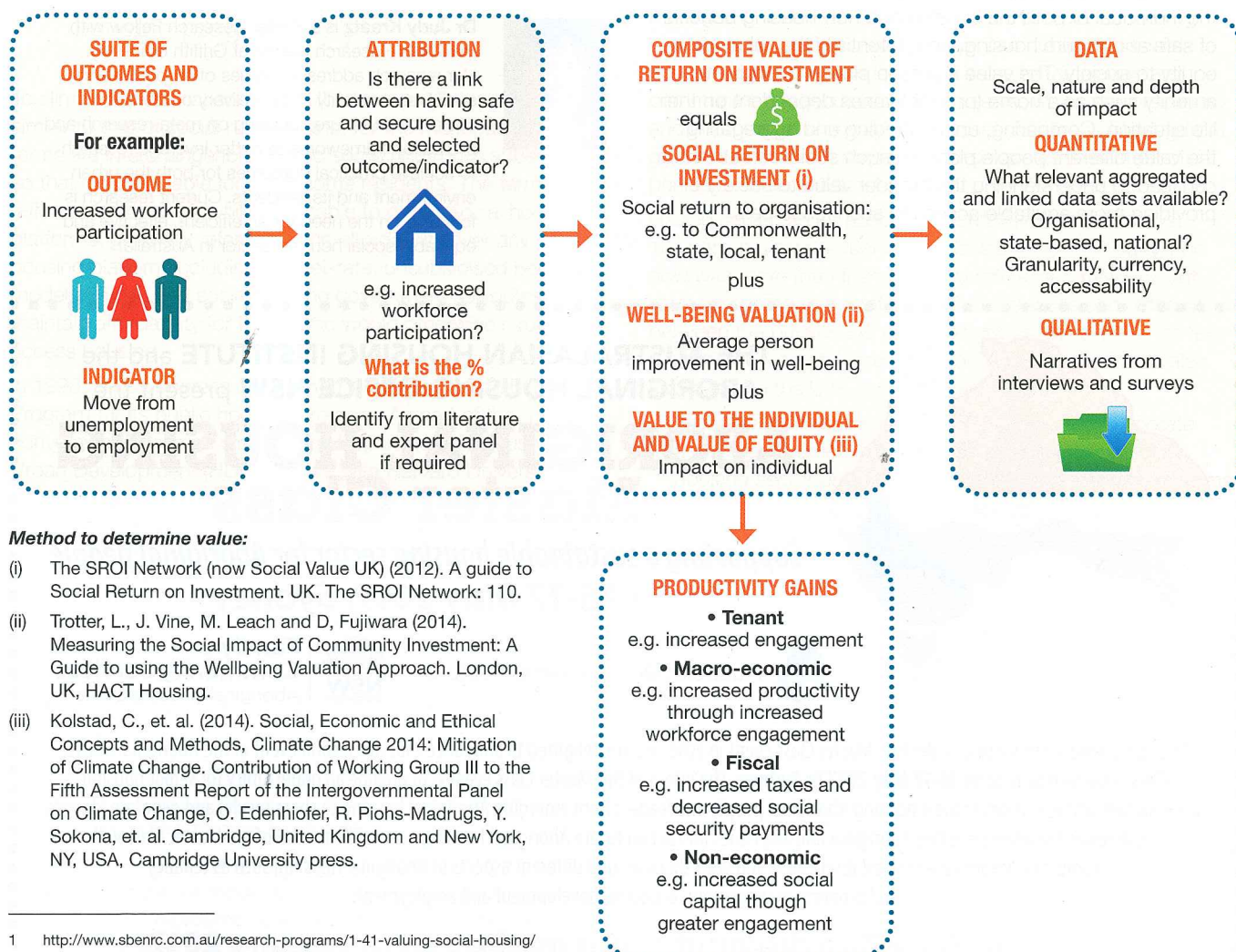
'Valuing Social Housing'<sup>1</sup> is a collaborative project with the Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre (SBEnc)<sup>2</sup> and partners Western Australian Housing Authority, Queensland Department of Housing and Public Works, NSW Land and Housing Corporation, the National Affordable Housing Consortium (Qld), Griffith University and Curtin University. This project continues foundation research reported on last year, 'Rethinking Social Housing',<sup>3</sup> which developed an overarching conceptual framework linking access to safe and secure housing to improved productivity.<sup>4</sup>

Three key elements for such a framework have been identified.

- **Attribution** – what evidence exists that safe and secure housing leads to, for example, better engagement with education?

Significant evidence has been found in literature across outcomes and indicators identified in previous research in the nine domains of community, economy, education, employment, environment, health and wellbeing, housing, social and urban amenity. Once a link has been found, and a percentage attribution established, this can be used to help identify the return on investment.

“ ... what evidence exists that safe and secure housing leads to, for example, better engagement with education? ”



## Method to determine value:

- The SROI Network (now Social Value UK) (2012). A guide to Social Return on Investment. UK. The SROI Network: 110.
- Trotter, L., J. Vine, M. Leach and D. Fujiwara (2014). Measuring the Social Impact of Community Investment: A Guide to using the Wellbeing Valuation Approach. London, UK, HACT Housing.
- Kolstad, C., et. al. (2014). Social, Economic and Ethical Concepts and Methods, Climate Change 2014: Mitigation of Climate Change. Contribution of Working Group III to the Fifth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, O. Edenhofer, R. Plohs-Madrugs, Y. Sokona, et. al. Cambridge, United Kingdom and New York, NY, USA, Cambridge University press.

1 <http://www.sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-41-valuing-social-housing/>

2 [www.sbenrc.com.au](http://www.sbenrc.com.au)

3 <http://www.sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-31-rethinking-social-housing-effective-efficient-equitable-e3/>

4 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMcOMujJw48>



- **Composite return on investment** – how do we measure these broader benefits, both in dollars and in intangible benefits, of providing safe and secure housing?

It is proposed that a single method does not capture the complex nature of the value returned to the individual and to society.

“ How do we measure these broader benefits, both in dollars and in intangible benefits, of providing safe and secure housing? ”

Three elements are proposed to address this complexity:

1. Social return on investment (SROI) can be used to provide a ratio of impact to dollars input and/or an aggregated dollar return on investment for defined benefits to society, which may accrue from the provision of social housing;
2. Measuring wellbeing could be used to address the impact on an average person's wellbeing of the broader non-housing benefits of access to safe and secure housing, and placing a dollar value on these; and
3. Individual narratives can be used to understand the value to the individual of both the housing and non-housing benefits of safe and secure housing, and potentially the value of equity to society. The value a person places on a given amenity such as a home (or a job) varies dependent on their life situation. Comparing, understanding and aggregating the value different people place on such social infrastructure can lead to understanding the broader value to society of providing more equitable access to such resources.

- **Data** – what data is available to help us understand the extent of the benefits?

Numerous national, state, local and organisational datasets are available but issues of accessibility, consistency, collection methods, suitability, cost-effectiveness, reliability and granularity arise. To address some of these issues and explore options for taking advantage of new approaches to data, a roundtable is being convened to share experiences and discuss opportunities.

The research team consisting of myself, Giles Thomson (Curtin University Sustainable Policy Unit) and Heather Shearer (Cities Research Centre, Griffith University) is currently bringing these elements together to better inform the current debate in Australia regarding the broader benefits of providing social housing. Our industry partners and Associate Professor Judy Yates (Project Steering Group Chairperson) are also providing critical strategic direction and guidance.

■ *The final report on this project will be available at our website in April 2017: <http://www.sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-41-valuing-social-housing/>*



**Dr Judy Kraatz** is a Senior Research Fellow with the Cities Research Centre at Griffith University. Her research addresses issues of corporate and social responsibility in the delivery of urban and social infrastructure, focusing on meta-research and evaluation frameworks to better leverage research to achieve practical outcomes for both the urban environment and its residents. Current research is focusing on the need for an efficient, effective and equitable social housing sector in Australia.



**THE AUSTRALASIAN HOUSING INSTITUTE** and the  
**ABORIGINAL HOUSING OFFICE NSW** present the  
**ABORIGINAL HOUSING Master Class**  
*Supporting a sustainable housing sector for Aboriginal people*  
• 16-17 May 2017, Sydney



**Australasian Housing Institute**  
Supporting housing professionals



**Family & Community Services**  
Aboriginal Housing Office

After the tremendous success of the first Master Class event in 2016, we are delighted to announce that the second event of the Aboriginal Master Class series will be held on **16-17 May 2017 in Sydney**. The intent of this Master Class event is to provide an opportunity for senior housing professionals whose primary focus is housing Aboriginal people and leaders from emerging Aboriginal housing to share results and generate ideas to work toward resolving existing Aboriginal housing issues and act on future Aboriginal housing needs. The format of the Master Class will combine relevant case studies, discussions and workshops around different aspects of Aboriginal Housing, such as tenancy and property management, economic development and employment.

**An Ultra Early Bird discount closes on the 31st of January 2017**  
**AHI Members register at only \$1,295**

*The rate includes 2 nights accommodation, meals and networking events during the Master Class*