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Paper Title: Australian Public Housing and the Diverse Histories of Social Mix

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Biographical Notes
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Some Recent Publications


AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC HOUSING AND THE DIVERSE HISTORIES OF SOCIAL MIX

In Australia, the concept of ‘social mix’ has strong currency in contemporary public housing estate regeneration policy where balancing social mix is attached to addressing social and behavioural issues on the post-war public housing estates. However, contemporary debates about social mix tend to ignore the finding that interest in social mix is by no means new. Attention to social mix has informed Australian new town planning and housing policy since the post second world war years, although the origins of the concept can be seen earlier in mid 19th century Britain. The focus of this paper is on examining the relevance of the concept of social mix through history by drawing on South Australian housing policy and the Salisbury North housing estate as a specific case study of social mix in practice. The aim is to show how the concept of social mix is constructed differently over time and how it has been adapted to our present situation of dealing with concentrations of impoverished residents on public housing estates. The paper draws on context, practice and texts as important variables that help to constitute the meaning of ‘social mix’.

Key Words: Social Mix, Social Housing, Housing Policy, Tenure Mix

Despite strong economic growth and increased prosperity within contemporary Australian society, within some neighbourhoods concerns remain about the problems of high unemployment, rising crime rates and anti-social behaviour. In order to grasp the scope and dimension of these current concerns about concentrations of disadvantage within particular neighbourhoods it is necessary to briefly consider the history of the development of the Australian public housing system and how it has changed over the past 50 years.

THE AUSTRALIAN PUBLIC HOUSING SYSTEM – A BRIEF HISTORY

During the immediate post Second World War period demand for housing in Australia outstripped supply in all Australian States and much of the existing housing was of poor quality. The shortage of housing partly resulted from the severe decline in construction during the 1930s depression and the Second World War. In order to address the demand at this time for decent
affordable and good quality housing, a major public sector building programme was implemented. The housing, to meet economies of scale, was mainly constructed in the form of estates on sizeable land holdings often located on the fringe areas of cities where large land holdings could be purchased relatively cheaply. Notwithstanding this initial support for developing public housing, successive Australian governments have provided greater support for home ownership, which is also preferred by the electorate, rather than the low-income public rental tenure. At its peak in 1966, 18 per cent of all Australian dwellings were public rental.\(^1\) Since that time Australian governments’ commitments to funding and delivery of public housing have declined and much of the better housing has been sold for home ownership. The sector currently houses 4.5 per cent of Australian households. In comparison, levels of home ownership are high at 66.2 per cent with 21.8 per cent of the population renting in the private sector and 0.4 per cent of the population living in community housing.\(^2\) With the contraction of the public housing sector it has moved from a secure alternative to home ownership for all low income households to a sector only for tenants with complex and multiple needs.

When the public housing estates were first constructed in the 1950s and 1960s, they raised the standards of housing to higher levels than previously existed.\(^3\) However, the post war stock is ageing leading to ongoing demands for maintenance and upgrading. By today’s standards, the housing is often poorly designed with problematic structures. It was built to house large families consisting of sizeable backyards while current waiting lists for public housing are characterised by smaller often-single parent families and ageing clientele. Much of the better quality more attractive and dispersed housing has been sold leaving the remaining and less popular housing concentrated on the estates (Hayward 1996). The housing on the estates was often mass-produced and homogenous in design and is generally characterised by row after row of similar housing, which makes it readily identifiable from surrounding suburbs. In combination, the social demographics of tenants and the physical characteristics of the housing have led some commentators to depict the estates as dysfunctional neighbourhoods.
The recent riots that took place in the Macquarie Fields social housing estate in Sydney have reinvigorated public and community debate into just what makes a functional neighbourhood. Amongst the questions posed are whether part of the problem is to be found in housing policies; in the ‘social mix’ of residents within particular neighbourhoods. A balanced social mix generally refers to the idea of creating neighbourhoods with a blend of residents with a range of income levels and age groups from across different housing tenures types, including social housing, private rental, and owner-occupied housing. This direction is pursued by policy makers in anticipation of assisting to create more stable and vigorous neighbourhoods than when disadvantaged residents are concentrated in one place. Whilst social mix is generally accepted as a fait accompli in contemporary planning and housing policy, the research literature is inconclusive on the benefits or otherwise of social mix.

Concern about social mix is by no means restricted to Australia as internationally, the UK Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recently released a consultation paper on the importance of ‘Planning for Mixed Communities’. Likewise, in the US, Federal legislation now requires that social housing estates have a mix of income groups, with no greater than 40 per cent of housing targeted to the most disadvantaged households. A wide ranging debate has ensued with, for instance, the state based community organisations ‘Shelter’ hosting several workshops to explore the issues around changing social mix on social housing estates. Concern about using social mix as a way to ameliorate the problems of concentrating poverty is by no means restricted to Australia as internationally interest in social mix is also reflected in the flurry of articles and special editions of major international journals, including ‘Housing Studies’ (Vol 17, 1 & Vol 18, 6) and ‘Urban Studies’ (Vol 38, 12). Hence, the topic of social mix is the subject of much contemporary interest and debate.
A key aspect that has often been overlooked in the renewed enthusiasm and contemporary debate about social mix is that this interest is by no means new. Wendy Sarkissian, writing in the 1970s, detailed how the idea of social mix, which had its origins in mid 19th century Britain, had informed Australian new town planning policy since the post second world war years of the late 1940s. In part, the contemporary lack of debate about social mix as an historical concept may reflect the situation whereby much of the current research on the topic of social mix is concerned with answering the policy related question of does it work. If we start from this question, it can become more important to measure and understand the social and economic effects of social mix, rather than commencing from explaining its historical use and significance. There is a substantial international literature that is based around questions of does social mix lead to improvements in residents’ health, education or employment prospects. This type of research then often attempts to measure and evaluate the level and size of the effects on disadvantaged residents’ lives of living in areas of concentrated poverty compared to neighbourhoods with a more variable tenure and income mix. Some of the other studies concerned with social mix have concentrated more on exploring aspects of residents’ contemporary everyday experiences, including social networks and social interactions. There is no questioning that collectively these sorts of studies have led to valuable information with which to inform contemporary debate about social mix.

However, in utilising approaches that start from policy related questions, such as does the policy work, some commentators argue that it becomes difficult to investigate the conceptual categories used in housing policy. Consequently, as the focus is on the here and now, limited attention is paid to questions of why and how policies, such as social mix, emerge or are adapted historically. Certainly, the historical dimension of social mix has received little attention in contemporary debates. One way forward is to examine the relevance of the concept of social mix through history by investigating the dominant debates about social mix and its use in policy and practice. Taking this approach provides a framework to scrutinise
changes in the policy and intellectual discourses, assumptions, meanings and interpretations of social mix over time. Hence, this paper explores the historical basis of social mix policies and the different notions of the term that have been utilised, through drawing on South Australian housing policy and using the Salisbury North public housing estate as a case study of social mix policies in practice.

In summary, social mix has emerged as a key policy issue in Australia and internationally. One of the principal aspects missing however, from recent accounts of social mix is an exploration of the relevance of the notion of social mix through history. Yet, public housing tenants living on estates represent some of the most marginalised groups in Australian and other western societies. Contemporary strategies to change social mix, adopted in estate regeneration, impinge on their quality of life and affect their future prosperity and well-being. Thus, it is important to understand the historical basis of social mix strategies and the different conceptions of the term. Policies can be driven by different agendas and if the underlying beliefs and assumptions are not placed in their historical context, we may be doomed to repeat past errors.

This paper seeks to contribute to both knowledge and understanding of the notion of social mix through paying close attention to how the idea of social mix is constructed at different times and how it has been adapted over time to our present situation as a tool for dealing with the concentrations of impoverished residents on public housing estates.

The three key questions of interest that will be addressed by this paper are:

1. What are the origins of the concept of social mix?
2. What are the problems that social mix is constructed to address?
3. How have these constructions changed over time?
To this effect the paper starts by exploring the dominant debates about social mix in mid 19th century Britain, which provided the foundation for its later adoption in Australia as a tool for housing policy makers. Then, discussion turns to the post Second World War period in Australia. The final section considers contemporary debates about social mix in estate regeneration policy. Taking this approach provides a way to ground the research, trace key debates about social mix, and then compare and contrast common themes, and clarify changes over time in order to establish shifts in meaning and highlight their application in different situations.

THE EARLY FOUNDATIONS OF THE CONCEPT OF SOCIAL MIX

British intellectuals and social activists in the mid 19th century were concerned with addressing the declining urban quality of towns and cities and the spatial segregation that had developed between the classes as the result of industrialisation. As the cities and towns became overcrowded and noisy, with inadequate housing and sanitary conditions, the upper and middle classes began to vacate these areas to reside in the countryside. The working classes became concentrated in the inner city areas in slum living conditions. Thus, the industrial towns and cities and their undesirable social conditions were commonly associated with the increasing concentrations of working class people in these locales. 13

This section examines the rationales underlying the development of three models adopted by social activists that linked housing and social mix in practice as ways to address the spatial segregation and worsening social and economic conditions of the late 19th century. The three models are Bournville Village, which was a seminal project in putting the idea of residential social mix into practice, 14 the Oxford Settlers in east London and the work of Octavia Hill.
Cadbury and Bournville Village

George Cadbury, the industrial chocolate maker, founded Bournville Village in 1895. Cadbury developed Bournville Village with a view to improving the morality and health of his workers through providing clean living environments and a balanced residential mix in terms of occupation and class. As restated by the Bournville Village Trust, Cadbury aimed to:

Provide high quality housing developments, distinctive in architecture, landscape and environment, in socially mixed communities, using best management practices to promote ways to improve the quality of life for those living in such communities. 15

Cadbury’s aim to create ‘socially mixed communities’ was enacted in the setting up of Bournville Village through vetting potential residents, specifically to create a mix of residents in terms of income and class. At Bournville the housing was designed so that the middle classes resided adjacent to the working classes.

Implicit within the development of Bournville were two principal ideas about the benefits socially mixed communities would provide for the working classes. First, there was an assumption that the working classes needed middle-income propinquity to provide role models of appropriate behaviour in order for them to become good citizens. From this perspective, the presence of middle-income residents was expected to instil a work ethic in the working classes and to educate them with middle class standards of behaviour. 16 Inextricably linked to this idea, the vision for Bournville depicted a romanticised and idealised notion about recreating the pre-industrial village in urban environments, with a view to producing mixed communities of classes and professions where everyone recognised their place on the social stratum. 17

The second rationale underlying the Bournville model originated from a fear of the poor and the related association of poverty with amoral and dangerous behaviour. As the classes became
more spatially segregated, the middle and upper classes developed a distorted image of the working classes, who were often portrayed as threatening. The concentrations of working class residents within the towns and industrial cities were perceived as threats to social harmony, which was confirmed by “sporadic riots”. From this viewpoint, dispersing the working classes to model villages, such as Bournville, under the direction of their employers was seen as a way to dispel the dangers of concentrating the working classes and what was perceived as their menacing presence.

The Oxford Settlers in London
Similar ideas about the benefits of social mix were implicit in the setting up of university settlements, such as the Oxford settlers in the East End of London. These settlements were concerned with locating the educated classes amongst the working classes within the cities. The aim was to provide working class residents with the benefits of resident gentry, comparable to the clergymen or squire in rural parishes, in order to inform the poor with middle class standards. Analogous to the development of Bournville Village, this depiction involved an idealised notion of the pre-industrial village with expectations that the different classes would coexist in social harmony. Once again, the insinuation was that the working classes did not know how to behave in proper ways and needed to have exposure to the values and behaviours of the middle and upper classes in order to become good citizens.

Octavia Hill
The UK social activist Octavia Hill also advocated comparable ideas about the working classes benefiting from exposure to middle class values. In the late 19th century, Hill carried out improvements to housing that she managed and rented out to disadvantaged tenants. From Hill’s viewpoint, the poor needed exposure to the educated classes so that the poor could have their morals and living standards improved. However, Hill’s provision of housing and social mix differed from Bournville and the Oxford Settlers in that it was not deemed necessary for the
different classes to live in close proximity. Alternatively, she aimed to bridge the gap between the classes through providing middle class role models and leadership, in the form of well-bred women acting as volunteers to visit her working class tenants. The role of these visitors was to provide advice and assistance “supplying them with flowers, teaching them to grow plants, arranging happy amusements for them, and in every way helping them to help themselves”. Hill wanted to free her tenants from what she envisaged as:

The corrupting effect of continual forced communication with degraded fellow lodgers; from the heavy accumulated dirt;….my strongest endeavours were to be used to rouse habits of industry and effort, without which they must finally sink….The plan was one which depended on just governing more than helping.  

In summary, in mid 19th century Britain the principal problem that the idea of social mix was conceived to address was spatial segregation between the classes, which had developed due to the processes of industrialisation. The undesirable slum conditions in the towns and cities were associated with the concentrations of the working classes in those locations. The discourses about social mix expressed fears that the concentrations of the working classes would lead to class conflict and social disharmony. Social mix was conceived as a solution because it diluted the concentrations of the working classes, rupturing their social solidarity and deflecting their perceived, potentially threatening behaviours. Having a mix of classes within the same localities, or alternatively utilising volunteer visitors, were envisaged as ways of providing middle class role models in order to educate the working classes and expose them to more appropriate models of behaviour than when the working classes were concentrated in one place. Clearly, 19th century social activists employed the concept of social mix in paternalistic ways in their efforts to create a more harmonious and orderly society. The use of social mix proffered a convenient device that targeted individual behaviour as the cause of problems of social and urban decline whilst leaving the existing hierarchical and inequitable social system in tact.
Interest in social mix slumbered between the two world wars until the idea was reinvigorated in the post second-world war years of the 1950s.  

SOCIAL MIX AND SOUTH AUSTRALIAN HOUSING POLICY 1950s – 1970s

In Australia, the immediate post Second World War period was a time of nation building with government construction of infrastructure and universal state provision of social housing, health, and other key services. A substantial public sector building program was implemented to address the then shortage of good quality, low-cost housing. Much of the housing, to meet economies of scale, was constructed in the form of large public housing estates. This section investigates the emergence of remnants of the earlier British discourses about social mix in South Australian housing policies. It draws on the case study of the Salisbury North housing estate.

The Construction of Salisbury North Estate
The Salisbury North public housing estate was constructed from 1950 to 1955, on an area of 160 hectares, 21 kilometres north of Adelaide, and consisted of 1,080 double rental units. The double units as shown in Figure 1, are a unique characteristic of public housing in South Australia and consist of two semi-detached duplexes divided by a shared common wall on either side.

Salisbury North estate represented the first South Australian Housing Trust (SAHT) development in the northern region of Adelaide. When the estate was constructed, the idea of social mix was not perceptible. At that stage, the SAHT catered mainly to working tenants with families and the imperative was to provide stable, affordable decent housing for the working classes as a stepping-stone to home ownership. Typical of the approach of the SAHT at that time, the housing was used to attract and service the growth in manufacturing industry in the northern regions. The Long Range Weapons Research Establishment (LRWE) located in the
immediate vicinity provided a large number of permanent jobs for residents of the estate. Around 75 per cent of the initial allocations of housing at Salisbury North went to employees of the LRWE and its allied companies many of whom were British immigrants. Until recently the SAHT had an open access policy, with no income restrictions, and to this effect eligibility for public housing rental was simply a matter of applying for assistance and then waiting until a suitable property became available.

**Integrating Public and Private Housing**

Clearly, when Salisbury North estate was originally constructed social mix was not a consideration. The estate was homogenous in terms of lacking different housing styles and a range of residents across different housing tenures, characterised as it was by working class families in public rental with many families originating from Britain. By the early 1960s these aspects of the estate categorized it as different, compared to the adjacent private residential areas. The estate also had limited facilities compared to other areas in that it lacked shopping, public transport, health services and other community amenities. Salisbury North estate was described thus:

> [as] a blot upon the face of the earth, it’s dirty and hardly anyone looks after their places….I suppose the Trust do their best but there are some places there that are a positive disgrace. It doesn’t give people much encouragement.

Seemingly, in attempting to reconcile some of these issues, the SAHT planned future estates with a mix of public rental tenants and private home owners. This commonly involved locating the rental housing, generally in the form of semi-detached double units, in the middle of the estate surrounded by detached single units that were available for private sale. The SAHT had developed two separate building programs, building houses for sale for homeownership as well
as providing rental housing. The rental-housing program was kept separate from the homeowner program, although the proceeds from sales of the latter were used to fund the building of more rental homes.

This cognisance of the idea of social mix was evident in the SAHT’s construction of the new town of Elizabeth, which followed Salisbury North in 1954. The project aimed to provide a variety of housing types and housing tenures in order to attract a cross section of income groups onto the estate. Mark Peel illustrates that in adapting the British model of new town planning to the Australian context many of the inherent paternalistic ideas about the poor and how they should behave were retained. The advocacy of social mix in the planning and building of the suburb assumed that the working class could not build community on their own but needed middle class role models and leadership to assist them. Planning for Elizabeth was based on the notion that tenants in rental housing, through the example of middle class role models, would aspire to become homeowners. 26 This assumption was embodied in the way the SAHT grouped and segregated pockets of the neighbourhood, according to financial status through the use of topography. At Elizabeth, rental homes were located closer to the factories on the plain whereas the homes for sale were sighted further from the factories on the more desirable inclines and elevated areas. The intention was that tenants would gradually move to better housing and up the social hierarchy without having to leave the area. As the, then, General Manager of the SAHT explained, the rental homes were:

Not unattractive but very modest, and as they are basically in the industrial areas it is usually found that when the family moves up the social scale the attitude is, ‘it is about time we moved somewhere else, to be amongst right-thinking people’. This idea of making sure these rented properties are not mansions does have that effect. It makes sure that these people just do not camp in low-rental houses all their lives. 27
These insinuations that the poor required middle class leadership in order to become good citizens were similar to the assumptions underlying the models of 19th century UK social reformers that linked housing and social mix. To reiterate, from the viewpoint of Octavia Hill, for instance, “different classes like different people, have separate characters, which are meant to act and react one on the other”. 28 In this characterisation, the working classes were depicted as disorderly and amoral and were seen to have much to gain from the exemplary behaviour of middle class role models.

**Mixing of Residents across Housing Tenures**

A major assumption of the arguments put forward for the benefits of social mix from the 1950s to 1970s was that propinquity would result in the different classes mingling with each other, or at least having some contact in their day-to-day lives. Hugh Stretton, Deputy Chairman of the SAHT in the 1970s, claimed two principal advantages for socially mixed neighbourhoods. First, heterogeneity of residents within neighbourhoods was thought to expose the inhabitants to alternative ways of life and to be of benefit to rich and poor residents alike:

> Besides taking each others children to the speed-car track races and the theatre, there are more important rich-and-poor exchanges of ambition, compassion, and the learning and initiative required to use whatever services are in theory offering. From poorer neighbours, affluent children may pick up better politics, mechanical skills and social capacities than their snobbish schools offer them. 29

Second, social mix was also thought to confer benefits on less affluent children through exposing them to middle class children attending the same schools and in doing so broadening their educational experiences. The manifestation of these benefits relied on contact occurring
between the classes. In reality, the experiences of residents of the estates often differed to that envisaged, as middle-income residents tried to distance themselves from neighbours of dissimilar social origins and more mixing was found to take place between residents where there was social homogeneity. For instance, two studies of Elizabeth conducted in the 1970s found that middle class residents socialised at local clubs but most of these clubs were not attractive to working class residents. 30

Social Mix and Equitable Access to a Range of Services
As highlighted previously, Salisbury North and other initial estates that were constructed in the immediate post war period often lacked access to essential facilities. The SAHT in its subsequent construction of Elizabeth attempted to overcome these shortcomings as it designed the town centre and provided land for schools, playgrounds, the hospital and kindergarten. At this stage, in addition to achieving goals of integration between homeowners and renters, social mix was also envisaged as an important tool to increase access for disadvantaged residents to fundamental goods and services. As Dean Lambert, the then specialist advisor at the SAHT on planning policy explained, this aspiration was based on the rationale that services are not evenly distributed across different areas. Thus, local councils with a tenure mix of properties, with a range of different capital values and residents with a spread of incomes, gain better revenue to provide infrastructure, services and other amenities than in areas where the poor are concentrated. 31 Likewise, Hugh Stretton expressed similar claims for social mix that:

Mixed suburbs can distribute municipal services equally to unequal rate-payers, but segregated suburbs make sure the poor get only what they pay for – including, sometimes, the municipal councillors. Segregation usually unequalizes people’s access to open spaces - to parks, views, well-kept playgrounds and playing fields, sometimes rivers and beaches. 32
From both these perspectives, the social mix of an area provided a basis for allocating services at an average level and was about equitable distribution of public funds across different neighbourhoods. The discourses about social mix were interwoven with governments’ concerns with achieving equity and social justice and devising programs, which were funded through the taxation system, to provide redistribution of goods and services from the better off to the less fortunate members of society.

From 1973 onwards, changes to the Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement, the major source of funding for social housing in Australia, enabled housing authorities to purchase and renovate established homes. The SAHT began purchasing scattered site older housing to rehabilitate and rent rather than constructing public housing estates. Social mix objectives were often pursued in these neighbourhoods against the protestations of private residents that the presence of SAHT tenants would lower the status of the areas. The SAHT also began to pursue social mix objectives in new urban developments on greenfield sites, involving joint ventures with the private sector, such as the master planned communities of Golden Grove and Seaford. In these privately constructed developments, public housing was less concentrated and more integrated with private housing than was possible on the public housing estates.

By the late 1970s, there was uncritical support for pursuing social mix objectives in South Australian housing policies. Social mix was an undisputed objective of the South Australian Housing Trust’s practice and formed part of the State Government’s social objectives. The South Australian State Labour Party Platform had a commitment to “the desirability of a greater housing and tenure mix”. At that time, social mix was a seemingly innocuous if sometimes paternalistic tool of housing policy makers. Unemployment was low and the practices associated with social mix were grounded in comprehensive planning and building and ideals of achieving equality. In particular, the pursuit of social mix objectives in housing policy reflected
the commitment of South Australian governments in those earlier eras to policies concerned
with the equitable distribution of wealth and other resources.

CONTEMPORARY DEBATES ABOUT SOCIAL MIX AND ESTATE REGENERATION

The Changing Social and Economic Context
The late 1970s in Australia, like other western countries, heralded the end of the long post-war
period of full employment and strong economic growth. The processes of economic
globalisation and industry restructuring, along with successive economic recessions in 1973-74
and 1982-83, meant the loss of jobs in manufacturing industry in most areas. These outcomes
had a disproportionate affect on public housing estates, especially in South Australia where they
were built to provide a labour force for local manufacturing industry. The restructuring and
closure of manufacturing industry in the five-year period from 1979 to 1984 resulted in the
percentage of SAHT tenants receiving rental rebates increasing from 35 per cent to 64 per cent.

Simultaneously, as the negative effects of economic change were impacting on the delivery of
public housing, a debate ensued about who should have access to public housing. In South
Australia, as nationally, there were criticisms of more affluent families who continued to occupy
public housing, which was seen to be at expense of more deserving families. The Henderson
Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, conducted in the mid 1970s, identified that the most
impoverished groups were not residing in public housing but tended to be private rental tenants.

To address this situation, the inquiry recommended implementation of new forms of income
redistribution, such as cash transfers, targeted to this specific group, which varied significantly
from the low-income working tenants to whom the housing authorities traditionally responded.
Albeit, the suggested initiative was non-housing specific, but it would have enabled the housing
authorities to charge market rents and recoup their costs. However, instead of adopting the
suggested initiative, the findings of the Henderson Inquiry were applied selectively to argue that subsidisation of better off tenants was occurring, whilst the most impoverished groups were prevented from accessing public housing. Hence, support developed for the proposition that public housing should be targeted only to people in greater need. Consequently, the 1978 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement proposed implementing market level rents to encourage the ‘better off’ public tenants to move into private rental. The States agreed, as a compromise, to set ‘market related’ rents.\(^{37}\)

From the mid 1980s onwards, despite the growing demand for public housing and the limited capacity of tenants to pay full rental costs, Commonwealth Government funding declined significantly. In the years between 1989 and 1999 funding under the CSHA decreased by almost 15 per cent.\(^{38}\) The decision taken by the Commonwealth Government in 1983 to deregulate the Australian finance system meant higher interest rates were payable on the States’ commercial borrowings. For States, such as South Australia, that took out larger loans to finance construction of greater numbers of public housing their position was made increasingly difficult by higher interest rates, leading to a build up of debt. Under the 1989 CSHA the Commonwealth ceased providing concessional loans to the States, with lower interest rates than were available commercially, and simultaneously tightened State financial matching requirements to try and maintain levels of funding. The overall effect was to substantially reduce the amount of funding available for the State Housing Authorities to expand the housing stock.

The progressively tighter restrictions governing access to social housing coupled with social and economic changes and reductions in funding have resulted in the public housing tenure becoming residualised, moving from housing for families and low income working tenants to housing for unemployed and high need tenants. At the beginning of the 21\(^{st}\) century, residents of
public housing estates often have high levels of reliance on social security payments for income, and mental health, physical health and other complex needs and issues. In some public housing neighbourhoods there are increasing problems of crime and anti-social behaviour. The growing socioeconomic segregation is highly visible in a spatial sense with neighbourhoods of impoverished residents, often characterised by high concentrations of social housing, adjacent to neighbourhoods that are more affluent. Renewed enthusiasm for implementing social mix policies on social housing estates is one response to this escalating spatial segregation and the difficulties of housing managers in dealing with an increasingly complex and high need client base.

**Salisbury North Estate, Urban Regeneration and Social Mix**

It is within the context of these changes that the Salisbury North estate was selected for the present-day estate regeneration initiative. Salisbury North was identified as a severely disadvantaged area in the early 1990s due to the high numbers of residents experiencing social disadvantage. The SAHT and City of Salisbury (the local council) initiated a Salisbury North Urban Improvement study in 1997 to explore ways to improve the suburb. Subsequently, the regeneration project officially commenced in mid 1998 and is planned to continue for approximately ten to fifteen years.

While the overall regeneration project incorporates a number of aspects, including physical housing renewal, community development and employment initiatives, one of the principal aims of the project is to achieve a better balance of social mix. The concentration of public housing stock is being reduced from 1,390 (37 per cent) of housing in the area prior to the commencement of regeneration to 500 houses (15 per cent) once the regeneration processes are finalised. A more balanced social mix is being achieved through demolition, infill and replacement of obsolete social housing with private housing to attract home owners to the estate, and relocation of public housing tenants to other areas. From the point of view of housing authority staff a more balanced social mix
Management Difficulties in Social Housing, Fear of the Poor and Anti-social behaviour

The relationship between housing policy and the need to address problems of anti-social behaviour on estates is at a critical juncture. This provides fertile ground for the emergence of earlier British debates about social mix that were intertwined with fear of the poor, class conflict and social disharmony. It is pertinent to note that these earlier debates are re-emerging internationally in contemporary housing policy as housing authorities grapple with the problems of anti-social behaviour. The work of Charles Murray, in particular, has been influential in international policy contexts. He argues that anti-social behaviours are a feature of a cultural underclass that denotes individuals and families with poor educational and vocational skills who choose not to seek employment. From this perspective, characteristics, such as unemployment and poverty, are intensified and maintained by a cultural order within particular neighbourhoods, which differs from mainstream society and makes it difficult to affect positive social change. Thus, areas with
concentrations of social housing, such as estates, are identified as breeding grounds of welfare dependency, with residents characterised as socially irresponsible, and problematic tenants. Public housing estates with high levels of unemployment are perceived as lacking role models or support networks to assist youth and other residents to enter and remain in the work force. In policy terms this leads to interventions aimed at the level of the individual and challenges attempts to devise modes of intervention focused at the structural level. From this viewpoint, changing the social mix on estates is a useful tool as it not only provides middle class role models but assists in preventing a culture of poverty from forming.

The Question of Mixing between Tenures
The problem remains that in these debates the anticipated goals for social mix are premised on social contact occurring homeowners and renters. Like the findings of earlier studies on social mix, contemporary research questions whether social interaction actually occurs between residents across different housing tenures. International studies of social housing estates have found that home owners generally leave the estates to work, and participate in various activities outside of the local neighbourhoods. By comparison, social housing tenants often lack access to motor vehicles and employment and tend to spend additional time on the estates and as a consequence develop more locally based social networks. Two recent Australian studies of suburbs with a mix of private and public tenancies found that tenure separated and distinguished communities, with public tenants often reporting that they were perceived as different and inferior. The authors concluded that, in relation to social mix, public tenants are not readily accepted into communities dominated by private owners and that little mixing seems to occur between residents across different housing tenures.

CONCLUSION
This paper has sought to enhance our understanding of the different agendas for social mix by considering its comparative historical context and purposes for which it has been used, in particular, in South Australian housing policy. In drawing together the conclusions, I return to the three questions that the paper commenced with: First, what are the origins of the concept of social mix? Second, what are the problems that social mix is constructed to address, and third, how have these constructions changed over time?

Clearly, the concept of social mix has been around for a long time, at least from the mid 19th century in Britain. At the heart of social mix policies are a number of competing debates about how poverty arises and is best addressed. Social mix policies have generally been a localised response to the problems of social segregation between the classes that arise due to broader social and industrial change. Originally social mix was coined as an idea in Victorian England to diffuse concentrations of the working classes, which were envisaged as a threat to social harmony. An alternative conception of social mix in South Australia in the 1970s was inextricably linked with government’s broader redistributive ideals to achieve equality of opportunity and social justice through broader planning and housing policy and major programs to redistribute services to the less fortunate members of society.

Despite these competing conceptions of social mix, a continuing theme of the ideals set for social mix from the past to present day is about the need for propinquity between poor and better off residents to enable the poor to become good citizens through the instrument of middle class leadership. Yet, this aim anticipates mixing between residents from across different housing tenures, which the literature suggests is an aspirational goal, rather than being achievable in practice, especially through housing authorities’ actions to make changes to social mix on existing estates. What seems obvious in the current historical exploration of social mix policies is that whether or not social mix policies are harmless or insidious depends in part on the social and political context in which they are situated. There is a danger that in the
contemporary context of residualisation of social housing and the emerging problems of anti-social behaviour on housing estates that the call for implementing social mix policies in Australia will draw on earlier Victorian discourses about fear of the poor and the need to manage their behaviour through dispersing concentrations of residents. This recognition that social mix is an historical concept needs to be more fully acknowledged in current debates about social mix if we are to avoid the mistakes of the past in devising contemporary housing policies.
Figure 1: Double Unit housing at Salisbury North (Source Kathy Artherson 2001)


3 (Neutze 1977 in Newton & Wulff 1983)


An exception is the work of Ian Cole and Barry Goodchild, “Social Mix and the ‘Balanced Community’ in British Housing Policy – A Tale of Two Epochs”, *GeoJournal*, 51, 4 (2000), 351-360, which has conducted some historical analysis of social mix policies, specifically, in UK housing policy commencing from 1979 onwards.


Ibid: 69.

Octavia Hill, *Homes of the London Poor*, no 8, State Charities Aid Association (New York, 1875), 35.

E Moberly Bell, *Octavia Hill, a Biography*, Constable (Leicester, 1943).


34 Dorothy Urlich Cloher & Blair Badcock, Forward, in Dorothy Urlich Cloher & Blair Badcock (Eds), Proceedings of Royal Geographical Society Symposium on Residential Mix (Adelaide, 1978), 5.


36 Commission of Inquiry into Poverty, Poverty in Australia, First Main Report, Volume 1, AGPS (Canberra, 1975).


43 (Housing officer Salisbury North).

44 (Housing officer Salisbury North).


