

Building Better Cities Program Synthesis and evaluation of literature

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1 Executive Summary

The Building Better Cities program (1991-1996)¹ was aimed at renewing parts of Australia's major urban areas. It involved a total public sector investment of \$2.3 billion, including a Commonwealth contribution of \$816 million.

The overall purpose of the program was broad and far-reaching. Its aims included improvements in the efficiency, equity and sustainability of Australian cities; increasing cities' capacity to meet economic growth and micro-economic reforms; improving social justice particularly through affordable housing; undertaking institutional reform in the redevelopment of urban areas; encouraging ecologically sustainable development; and improving urban environments.

The program funded a total of 26 'area strategies' which included Ultimo-Pyrmont and Eveleigh in Sydney, Honeysuckle in Newcastle, East Perth in Perth, and Inner Melbourne.

One of the major successes of the program was the significant leveraging of government funding and private investment. For example, the Honeysuckle urban renewal project on Newcastle's harbour front received \$71 million Commonwealth funding through the Building Better Cities Program and a further \$29 million New South Wales government funding. The project has since generated \$1.335 billion in economic activity and injected 4 884 full-time equivalent new jobs into the Newcastle economy. The project delivered new jobs in a variety of sectors, such as construction and professional services, while at the same time delivering new residents and workers to the city. It also stimulated a large amount of private sector investment of over \$500 million (Hunter Development Corporation 2009).

In 2009 the Australian Government commissioned a literature evaluation of the Building Better Cities program to determine what major lessons could be drawn from the program some two decades later. The research methodology is outlined in Appendix C.

The evaluation found that:

- The program was an effective, ground-breaking initiative for urban redevelopment in Australia
- Funded projects were significantly more comprehensive and leveraged greater outcomes than would otherwise have been possible without the program: the relatively modest funding catalyst led to significant value adding. Without this funding, no single agency with their individual budgets was prepared to commit. This catalyst funding and commitment opened the door to other 'add on' possibilities that could not have been envisaged without the initial investments
- Relatively small capital investment from Commonwealth and State governments leveraged significant investment from private industry particularly in locations such as East Perth, Pyrmont and Honeysuckle
- Collaboration between agencies and levels of government was generally productive, although at times processes and relationships were difficult
- The program launched new urban redevelopment governance models such as the East Perth Redevelopment Authority and Honeysuckle Development Corporation
- Weaknesses in the program included examples where delivery of affordable housing was less successful, such as West Perth and Pyrmont where house prices were lifted beyond the average person's reach; some poor urban design outcomes; and a lack of evaluative data

¹ Note that the program name was later changed to Better Cities Program. However for the purposes of this report it is referred to in the text consistently as Building Better Cities.

- Partial cost-benefit assessments some projects have found economic multiplier effects of two to four times the expenditure of governments. In some cases this effect has been even greater, such as Honeysuckle where \$100 million government funding has generated \$1.335 billion in economic activity.

Overall, the Building Better Cities Program is credited with improving coordination and planning between levels of government and across functional agencies. It successfully leveraged government funding and private investment in several prominent urban redevelopment projects in Australian cities, many of which may not have been achieved without such funding.

Finally, whilst the successes of some objectives varied, the program had multiple positive outcomes including new models for governance in urban redevelopment, demonstration of high-density housing and mixed use development, environmentally sustainable development and integrated public transport.

2 Background

The Building Better Cities Program was a joint Commonwealth and State government initiative for demonstration projects in urban redevelopment in cities around Australia.

The Commonwealth government contributed \$816.4 million in untied capital grants over a five year period (1991-1996), with State and Territory governments committing further funding to a total public sector investment of \$2.3 billion.

The program was delivered through twenty-six distinct 'Area Strategies' across Australia including Ultimo-Pyrmont and Eveleigh in Sydney, Honeysuckle in Newcastle, and East Perth. The allocation of Commonwealth funding for each state and territory was on a per capita basis, using time-limited, outcome-oriented funding agreements (refer Appendix A).

The purpose of Building Better Cities was 'to improve management of Australia's cities, to demonstrate better urban planning and service delivery, and to improve coordination within and between the three levels of government' (Collins, Farrelly, & Richards, 1995 i).

The program was intended to increase economic efficiency and competitiveness, and address three challenges facing Australian cities:

- a. rapid growth and a demand for infrastructure investment on the fringe of major cities
- b. loss of population and under use of facilities and services in established urban areas
- c. the increasing social, environmental and economic cost of poorly planned and managed cities (Collins et al., 1995 i).

Approved projects were expected to demonstrate:

- the advantages of an integrated approach to planning and development
- the potential to improve the efficiency of cities, and create savings for government, industry and individuals
- potential to improve the quality of life of all citizens from these cooperative approaches (Collins et al., 1995 5).

The program was delivered through twenty-six distinct 'Area Strategies' across Australia. Details of each Area Strategy can be found in Appendix B of this report.

The process of negotiating and approving all the Area Strategies took nearly three years: the first projects were approved in December 1991, with the final agreements approved in late 1994.

Interventions included:

- Remediation of land
- Public transport investment – new services and better linkages between services
- Infrastructure improvements and upgrading to support higher residential densities – water and waste management, roads
- Release of land - underutilised government holdings (sometimes as part of a de-institutionalisation of people with disabilities)
- Public space creation or upgrading, bicycle routes
- Planning guidelines – increased housing densities and mixed use areas.

Lyndsay Neilson, then chief executive of the National Capital Planning Authority which was the Commonwealth agency leading development of Building Better Cities, described the program as essentially a problem solving machine:

On the question of delivery, one of the issues that was critical at the beginning was the question of how to manage development or manage growth and change to achieve these kind of objectives. We wanted states to look at that question, and to come up with some innovations in management as part of the whole package.... We wanted to demonstrate, to innovate and experiment, and to see a local government do that. (Dawkins et al., 1996 37)

Neilson identified the following key features of the program:

- Capital investment
- New federal-state governance model
- Multiple outcome domains
- Private investment leverage.

Appendix A outlines the allocation of Commonwealth funds by state and territory, and the notional government expenditure across major categories of investment.

3 Evaluation

3.1 Overall lessons

During and immediately after its conclusion, Building Better Cities was widely considered an effective, ground-breaking initiative by participants and close observers (Collins et al., 1995; Dawkins et al., 1996; Neilson, 2008). This positive assessment, while not evidence of 'hard outcomes', signals a broader synthesis finding that the enforced collaboration between agencies and levels of government was productive and satisfying for the participants (though it was also at times difficult and not always successful).

In late 1996, just following the new Federal Government's decision to cease funding to the Better Cities program, the University of Technology Sydney (UTS) held two seminars to review and discuss the achievements and emerging lessons from the program. Papers were delivered by key participants from State and Federal levels, observing academics, evaluators and from NSW Area Strategy leadership.

At the first UTS seminar planning academics, Glen Searle and Jeremy Dawkins, declared:

Australia has changed, very much for the better, as a result of this program. It is not often that our imperfect political processes deliver such a clearly beneficial outcome.' (Dawkins et al., 1996 6)

There were also critics of the program. One notable commentator accused it of short-term political opportunism masquerading as a concerted effort to improve urban redevelopment efforts. Linking the program to factional negotiations, Badcock claimed: 'this somewhat makeshift urban program had all the hallmarks of a 'payoff' for the Left's support at the time of the first leadership challenge' (Badcock, 1993 75; cited by Gerner, 1996).

These inevitable political motivations, highlighted by Badcock, are relevant to the context which mediated the effectiveness of the Building Better Cities mechanisms for delivering coordination and planning between levels of government and functional agencies. Further evidence of this contextual mediation is provided in the evaluation reports considered later in this report.

Despite considering it too early to evaluate a program seeking long-term outcomes, Searle and Dawkins ventured the following comments about the Building Better Cities program:

- It enabled projects that were 'significantly more comprehensive and ground-breaking than would otherwise have been possible'
- It improved inter-governmental cooperation in urban planning and management across several jurisdictions
- It identified challenges to delivering affordable housing
- It identified challenges to participatory dimensions of social justice in urban renewal because 'higher money returns from state government land holdings are brought by larger and faster developments'.

At the second UTS seminar Sue Holliday, then Deputy Director General NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, and Susan Parham from the NSW Better Cities Program, reported on emerging lessons from the NSW experience drawing on work in progress to evaluate the NSW projects (Dawkins et al., 1996 69-75).²

Holliday and Parham similarly concluded that Building Better Cities was a profound and successful experiment, and not just for the specific Area Strategies, because it changed the way NSW approached planning. They declared that Building Better Cities: 'brought policy integration, strategic planning and implementation into the mainstream' (Dawkins et al., 1996

² The search phase of the synthesis did not find this evaluation.

75). In addition, they found that it exceeded expectations and was successful in leveraging the primary investment:

Better Cities has produced much more positive, much more substantial outcomes than were forecast in the early 1990s, and that the relatively modest funding catalyst has led to significant value adding. (Dawkins et al., 1996 69)

Holliday and Parham identified a number of lessons from the NSW experience relevant to understanding the Building Better Cities mechanisms, as outlined in sections 3.2 to 3.4 below.

3.2 Leveraging capital investment

Catalytic funding was critical for getting large projects off the drawing board because without it, no single agency with their individual budgets was prepared to commit. This catalyst funding and commitment then opened the door to other 'add on' possibilities that could not have been envisaged without the initial large investment.

3.3 Setting limitations

Holliday and Parham found that the time limited period and 'preoccupation' with outcomes was critical to successful implementation and to cross traditional boundaries: 'We knew we had to achieve what we wanted to achieve within that time frame' (Dawkins et al., 1996 73).

The area approach, they found was 'a valuable technique' because it provided a practical basis for coordinated planning:

The area focus emphasises the linking of otherwise separate outcomes so that coordinated planning and integrated project delivery can occur. (Dawkins et al., 1996 71, 74)

Holliday and Parham noted that the NSW Area Strategies were of different scales and therefore demonstrated that the multiple outcome focus could be achieved at sites of different geographic sizes.

They found that partnerships were used to achieve shared vision and outcomes, and this practice transformed the culture of inter-agency interactions:

Agencies who have been involved have in fact reported that the experience has changed the way they plan, and affected the purpose for integrating their activities with others.' (Dawkins et al., 1996 73)

They noted that strategic planning was essential to found a balance between institutional tensions and the multiple outcome requirements.

Integrated policy and budgets were highly beneficial, and they noted that this combination of partnerships and strategic planning led to the opportunity to combine budgets across agencies and generate a more effective intervention:

The Better Cities area strategies show that strategically integrated action produces significant multiplier effects. (Dawkins et al., 1996 74)

Building Better Cities' support for innovation and best practice was also identified as a critical and valuable factor:

That was an incredibly powerful tool, to be able to go to other agencies and government and say in order to really fulfil the requirements of this program we must innovate. The program, I believe, has shown that innovation is likely to emerge when so enabled. (Dawkins et al., 1996 74)

3.4 Private sector and community involvement

Holliday and Parham highlighted the importance of consultation and participation facilitated through 'open integrative management structures and processes' which aided in problem resolution and overcoming barriers.

They noted, however, that this was not an easy element to sustain and relied on strong leadership: 'we've had to really push very hard in order to keep that element of the program alive' (Dawkins et al., 1996 74-5).

Other sources identified urban design and the lack of evaluative data as weaknesses in the Building Better Cities program.

3.5 Urban design outcomes

A significant weakness with Building Better Cities program was its poor use of urban design.

In his doctoral thesis exploring the performance of Building Better Cities in urban design terms, Pem Gerner investigated what happened 'on the ground' in 22 of the 26 Area Strategy sites. Gerner found that, while urban design was a stated objective of Building Better Cities, the central elements of urban design only minimally featured in the programs structures and processes.

Gerner found that the role of urban design in Building Better Cities was 'at best passively supportive' and that successful urban design outcomes were reduced by 'the absence of specific and succinct urban design guidelines in the terms of reference' (Gerner, 1996 308, 310). This resulted, for example, in poorer than necessary housing outcomes. Gerner found that the medium density housing was on the whole 'exceedingly disappointing' in its interaction with, and presentation to, the streetscape.

Results were mixed in the delivery of affordable housing. The challenge of delivering good affordable housing, Gerner observed, was to resolve the challenges of achieving social mix, adequate design and detailing, and adequate construction standards. Gerner identified Bishopgate and Railway Streets in Honeysuckle as examples of poor affordable housing development. However Gerner also found examples of good affordable housing in the Church Street housing Brisbane; Theatre Mews Wapping, Hobart; the student housing directly behind Wickham School, Honeysuckle and the City West housing at Ultimo-Pymont.

4 Evaluative data

The two program audits and the national evaluation described below all identify a lack of baseline data as an obstacle to evaluating the program, suggesting that this could be improved in the future with better program documentation.

However, Neilson has suggested that assessment against baseline data was 'virtually impossible' and not necessarily a useful way to evaluate Building Better Cities. The outcomes sought were not, in their very nature, amenable to simple measurement. What was required, Neilson has argued, are 'indicators of the actual performance of the urban system,' not statistics, such as housing stock numbers (Dawkins et al., 1996 41).

While on a practical rather than conceptual level, Neilson has also described the impact of the delicate political negotiations involved in implementing Building Better Cities, commenting: 'there was a measure of reluctance on the part of our partners and we didn't really want to insist too much' (Dawkins et al., 1996 41).

4.1 National program evaluation, 1995

A national independent evaluation of Building Better Cities was commissioned by the Commonwealth Department of Housing and Regional Development. John Collins, Pat Farrelly and Gary Richards were employed as the evaluation team. This evaluation was intended to assess the program's performance to date, identify improvements for the remaining program period, and to inform the planning for the second stage of Building Better Cities.

The difficulties confronting this evaluation were considerable and can be readily understood given the nature of the program. Not least of which were the tasks of estimating the potential demonstration effect accruing from each project, and evaluating the impact of new processes. An overall lack of baseline data inhibited evaluation efforts.

Notwithstanding these difficulties, the evaluation clearly highlighted the multi-mechanism character of the program in concluding that:

The program's innovation at the level of funding models and management arrangements has been at least as substantial as it has been at the 'technical' level of project planning and implementation (Collins et al., 1995 91).

Nine representative Area Strategies were selected for detailed review, and independent reports were commissioned on the program's overall performance against five objectives: ecologically sustainable development, economic growth, institutional reform, social justice and affordable housing.

The reviews focused on the efficacy, added value and cost efficiencies (or not) of the Area Strategy approach, as well as performance against objectives and planned outcomes. The evaluation report stated that the purpose of the Building Better Cities Program was to promote improvements in the efficiency, equity and sustainability of Australian cities and to increase their capacity to meet the following objectives:

- Economic growth and micro-economic reform
- Improved social justice
- Institutional reform
- Ecologically sustainable development
- Improved urban environments and more liveable cities.

The key development strategies favouring for achieving these objectives were:

- Generally higher densities and a greater mix of housing options

- Extension of new suburbs around high quality public transport links
- Multi-nucleated city forms to minimise aggregate demand for car travel
- More efficient pricing and funding of infrastructure
- Improvement in urban environmental design
- General accessibility to improvements in the cities' cultural, recreational and educational resources.

The evaluation firstly found that the concept of Commonwealth intervention in urban development and management issues was soundly based and that Building Better Cities was an appropriate mechanism.

Commonwealth intervention was justified firstly on the grounds of economic performance due to the central economic role of cities, and in particular the impact of urban transport and infrastructure costs on business and the community. Secondly, it was justified on grounds of responsibility for social welfare, which was strongly affected by housing affordability and location (by its relation to employment costs and accessibility), as well as the accessibility of other services and amenities including recreational and cultural resources. Finally, urban development was judged to be critical to the Commonwealth's concerns with environmental sustainability by its influence on 'land take' and greenhouse gas emissions (Collins et al., 1995 21-2).

The Building Better Cities program was judged by the evaluation team to be an appropriate vehicle because it addressed the 'silo thinking' of functional agencies working alone, and because geographic delimitation provided an effective way to bring the 'whole of government' to bear on the coordinated delivery of agreed outcomes. The evaluation team noted that there was widespread agreement on these assumed benefits amongst program stakeholders.

Furthermore, it was judged that the financial investment in strategic capital works was critical to the success of Building Better Cities and that funding for planning and coordination on its own would not have delivered the practical outcomes.

Selection of Building Better Cities projects occurred in a restrictively short time frame, but the evaluation found that this did not adversely affect the program's success and was appropriate to maintain momentum and credibility. It did, however, recommend that future processes could include briefing the States and Territories on the selection process to provide greater transparency about the Commonwealth's priorities; also, consideration could have been given as to how to support greater local government or non-government involvement in the development of local Area Strategies.

Overall the review of the Area Strategies found they were successful in achieving milestones and agreed key outputs; the Building Better Cities was successful in bringing forward a range of beneficial projects, and the 'top up' funding certainly allowed the state authorities to experiment with innovative planning and design solutions they would have otherwise been unable to attempt.

Integration of the Area Strategies in a broader regional plan could also have improved results in some areas.

Collins et al identified four critical factors for effective management of Area Strategies:

- The existence of a State agency with a clear lead or coordinating role
- An influential 'champion' at the Area Strategy level
- Demonstrated State Government interest (to ensure the commitment and cooperation of functional agencies)
- Local government involvement and support.

The evaluation found that the formation of a 'development corporation' was not recommended unless demanded by the complexity of the Area Strategy or the need to internally distribute financial benefits between elements of a strategy. It had the negative consequence of reducing ownership and responsibility by functional agencies therefore reducing the organisational cultural change sought by Building Better Cities.

The Building Better Cities agreements included a Commonwealth requirement for annual formal written evaluation reports. This process was found to be overly formal, slow and administrative, with little practical benefit to the program Areas. The evaluation team recommended instead annual workshops with each Area to review progress and plan solutions, and consideration of other accountability mechanisms to draw on the State's existing monitoring and reporting processes to reduce the administrative burden.

The evaluation found that Commonwealth agencies were excluded from the formal coordination mechanisms designed to promote integration between state level authorities. The evaluation thought that this omission could be rectified by including representatives of key Commonwealth agencies in the Area Strategy coordinating committees (Collins et al., 1995 38-9).

The Area Strategy was a key Building Better Cities mechanism for generating integrated planning and implementation, however the evaluation found the agreements to be overly complex leading to either overly rigid specification of performance milestones, or too flexible, allowing substantial 'reinterpretation' over time (Collins et al., 1995 93).

Collins et al recommended that future versions of Building Better Cities simplify and clarify the structure of the Area Strategy agreements, and emphasise objectives, outcomes, program elements, key performance measures and indicative cash flows. They would also benefit from documenting the criteria for assessing planning and priority changes as implementation of the strategy proceeds.

And finally, to properly allow outcome evaluation in the future, they recommended that funds be allocated for the collection of baseline data (Collins et al., 1995 101).

4.2 Report from the Australian National Audit Office, 1996

The Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) audit found that the program was effectively managed and in most cases the agreed outputs (principally the capital items constructed) were delivered on time. The Office found however that accountability for *outcomes* (such as improved transport efficiency, better use of existing infrastructure and more affordable housing) was poorly achieved. This was not least because the initial program documentation lacked conceptual clarity on the difference between outputs and outcomes (ANAO, 1996 8-12).

The ANAO concluded that it was not possible to determine if the program had achieved its outcome objectives. For the monitoring of individual Area Strategy performance, two key problems were the lack of practical specification of qualitative and quantitative outcome measures, and the lack of adequate baseline data against which to assess progress. Furthermore the lack of national performance indicators prevented evaluation and comparison of the different projects across the program.

The audit thus found that the program succeeded in achieving its urban construction and development outputs, but could not determine if the economic efficiency, social justice and environmental outcomes were achieved.

It noted that, given the long term nature of the desired outcomes, future programs of this type could instead specify progressive output performance measures.

The evidence from the UTS seminars suggested however that the focus on outcomes, while not able to generate adequate performance monitoring, was nonetheless a mechanism for forcing coordination in the planning and implementation process (Dawkins et al., 1996).

4.3 Report by the Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996

In Victoria, the Auditor-General was commissioned to assess whether Victoria's State Government management processes facilitated achievement of the Building Better Cities Program objectives (Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996). This objective was intended to be complementary to the ANAO audit and the Collins et al (1995) evaluation conducted in the same time period.

Overall the Auditor-General of Victoria found that Victorian Building Better Cities projects were managed very efficiently. It found that 15 of the 19 projects had been successfully completed in line with their agreed milestones by June 1996. The remaining four projects were on track for completion by the end of 1997, and state agencies were found to have taken prompt action to minimise delays.

Amongst the diversity of objectives identified in Victoria's four area strategies, the Auditor-General found common themes linking the Building Better Cities program objectives were:

- economic development
- pursuit of labour market outcomes, particularly related to increased labour mobility
- the development of underutilised land
- increased population and housing density
- improved public transport.

Six of the nineteen projects approved were already under development by the state.

The report found that innovative planning was used in the project management approaches with 'definite potential for wider application across the public sector'. The response to the report from the Victorian Secretary, Department of Infrastructure indicated that the then government intended to maintain a commitment to the Building Better Cities principles of managed urban development and planning.

The report identified the key role of the area strategies in delivering the coordinated planning and implementation of Building Better Cities:

The concept of area strategies was central to the Program's planning and implementation within the States. The concept was the catalyst for putting into place an arrangement designed to complement an overall aim of the Program which was to provide impetus for a co-ordinated approach to all urban development within distinct geographic areas. (AGV 1996 28)

The Auditor-General found that the Building Better Cities goals could have been enhanced if Area Strategies had a tighter focus on integrated and coordinated planning and implementation. It noted that in some cases development was focused on individual projects within an area strategy without much focus on the relationships between the projects. The Department of Infrastructure responded by noting that other Area Strategies were strongly linked, and claiming that projects 'were only ever intended to be catalysts for more systemic change across an area strategy' and that other government activities were also contributing to Building Better Cities goals.

This exchange of comments, like the evidence from NSW presented in the UTS seminars, indicates the difficulty of achieving the goal of collaborative, integrated planning across functional agencies and levels of government.

A key risk of the Building Better Cities funding model was that it would merely replace previously allocated state funds. The evaluations demonstrated that both monitoring and management of this risk is complex. For example, the Auditor-General of Victoria found that Building Better Cities funding for devolution of institutions effectively replaced state funding for deinstitutionalisation:

The availability of funding under the Program coincided with a 53 per cent reduction in the State's budget allocations for 1991-92, from \$28 million to \$13 million, for capital works dealing with deinstitutionalisation of psychiatric services. (AGV, 1996 35)

However the Department of Human Services contests this conclusion by explaining that capital allocations were put on hold pending a 1992 review of psychiatric services, and subsequently capital allocations were increased based on the new funding framework.

A feature of the Building Better Cities funding agreement which facilitated this confusion was that the State contribution was aggregate and reported only at the Area Strategy level. Furthermore, the Auditor-General found that:

Separate records relating specifically to the expenditure of State funds on individual projects have not been maintained by the various government agencies. As such, it was not possible for audit to verify and analyse aggregate expenditure by the State under the Program. (AGV, 1996 17)

Another example of confusion arose in the sale of public land in South Melbourne for redevelopment. It was unclear whether the proceeds of this sale (\$27.2 million) were to be in addition to, or part of, the state contribution agreed in the Area Strategy (\$47.0 million).

The report found some inconsistencies between Building Better Cities approved projects and the plans of the relevant state authority (in this case the Public Transport Corporation) and suggested that more optimal urban redevelopment may have occurred if approved projects reflected the relevant authority's priorities. The Department of Infrastructure's reply was worth citing as a further indication of the delicate boundary negotiations inherent in the ambitious and multi-levelled collaboration promoted by Building Better Cities:

How the Victorian Government determines its priorities is a matter for government policy. (AGV 1996 40)

The Auditor-General of Victoria agreed with the ANAO that the lack of specified concrete, measurable indicators combined with broad qualitative statements about desired long-term outcomes prevented assessment of the programs' outcome performance. Nonetheless, they conclude that it is clear that the individual programs 'made significant value adding contributions from a broad urban development perspective' (AGV 1996 43).

Finally, the Auditor-General found that the demonstration element of Building Better Cities was not well understood or implemented; demonstration activities largely focused on the outputs rather than on demonstrating innovative new processes for urban planning and development (AGV 1996 44-5). However the Department of Infrastructure responded that the state took the demonstration aspect of Building Better Cities seriously and implemented a range of activities to ensure the dissemination of learnings from the program:

The Victorian approach provided a model for practice elsewhere. It included the hosting of technical seminars; production of a range of newsletters, brochures, videos, sponsorships of research projects, involvement of planning courses and students at Victorian universities; and nomination of innovative and best practice elements of projects for various State and national professional awards. (Secretary, Department of Infrastructure cited in Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996 70).

5 Legacy outcomes of the program

5.1 Improved coordination and planning

Participants and evaluators consistently credited Building Better Cities with improving coordination and planning both between levels of government and across functional agencies. This achievement was not without its challenges, as the following section demonstrates.

One of the speakers at the UTS seminars was Robert Webster, NSW Minister for Planning 1991-1995. Webster noted that political sensitivities were particularly acute for NSW, as they were then the only Coalition government in Australia:

There was a real challenge for Brian Howe to convince, not only New South Wales, but all of the states, that Building Better Cities wasn't a take-over of the state's planning powers by the Commonwealth, that it wasn't the Commonwealth lecturing the state governments on how to plan its cities because we didn't know anything and they knew more than we did. (Dawkins et al., 1996 23-4)

Webster reported that Area Strategy negotiations took 16 months and that NSW was the last state to sign. For NSW (as elsewhere), it was essential to ensure that the Building Better Cities projects were complimentary to the existing state priorities. Also critical to the ultimately successful implementation was the building of a ministerial relationship between Webster and Howe which endured to the end and enabled resolution of some of the difficulties encountered (Dawkins et al., 1996 24-5).

One of the issues was conflict with local government priorities. For example in City West in Sydney's Pyrmont district, the Council Lord Mayor's vision was for 'low rise fine grained residential precinct' which could not justify the infrastructure expenditure, nor meet the Building Better Cities urban consolidation objectives. Webster and Howe devised a solution by creating an independent Urban Design Advisory Committee to review development applications.

Webster concluded with a statement that reinforced both the value of the program, and the underlying current of political motivations which may be inherent to such inter-governmental collaboration:

'It was also very important from New South Wales' point of view, to concede in the early stages that the aims and objectives of Building Better Cities were excellent. Whether or not we as the New South Wales government could learn as much as you suggested we could learn from the process, Brian, I suppose will be a matter for continuing debate. I think the outcome for New South Wales from better Cities has been a very positive one indeed.' (Dawkins et al., 1996 32)

The involvement of the Commonwealth in urban planning and development was contentious, as demonstrated by the chapter devoted to justifying this involvement in the Collins et al (1995) evaluation.

In contradistinction to this, Raymond Bunker's 2008 analysis of state based urban planning mechanisms has indicated the increasing importance of national involvement due primarily to the globalised context and the impacts of climate change:

Increasingly, issues about climate change, transport and energy and water management will inescapably draw the Commonwealth Government into national and international agreements which will affect the capital cities in which most Australians live. (Bunker, 2008 41)

5.2 Economic impacts

The existing partial cost-benefit assessment of Building Better Cities based on economic modelling found an economic multiplier effect of between two to four times government expenditure on the program. Consequently the nine area strategies under consideration generated a positive economic impact exceeding the costs counted as expenditure by government outlays (Collins et al., 1995 33).

Three economic impact studies of Building Better Cities were conducted:

1. Spiller Gibbins Swan, completed in January 1995, was a detailed analysis of three area strategies
2. Morris Consultants in April 1995 considered the whole programs' impact on property value, private sector investment and employment generation
3. Morris Consultants conducted a further study using NIEIR modelling to consider the overall economic effects of Building Better Cities on nine area strategies, using 'rules of thumb' identified in the first two studies, to estimate an average pattern of resource savings.

Subsequently, the Centre for International Economics was commissioned to prepare a background 'Working Paper' for the Collins et al (1995) national evaluation with the intention of making the economic modelling, reported in the first three studies, more accessible to policy makers.

A full cost benefit analysis of Building Better Cities was not conducted due to practical difficulties. The Centre for International Economics report explained that:

Many of the area strategies supported by the Better Cities Program (BCP) are, in principle amenable to ex post cost benefit analysis. However, in practice, the diversity of activities covered by the BCP, the probable non-availability of detailed information on critical elements of these activities, combined with rather difficult conceptual problems of determining the appropriate measure of cost, make application of such analysis very difficult'. (Working Paper 2, 6, *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers*, 1995)

In particular it commented that without 'detailed cost benefit analyses on a subprogram basis' it is not possible to undertake anything other than 'the most simplistic of assessments'.

In lieu of full cost benefit analysis economic modelling focusing on shifts in government expenditure and the likely effect of this on the economy was used to generate an assessment (Working Paper 2, 16, in *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers*, 1995).

Economic impact was assessed in terms of projected changes in gross product, employment, inflation, industry outputs, the balance of payments current account and government revenue. The assumed expenditure shifts were as follows (Collins et al., 1995 30):

- Initial increase in economic activity due to fiscal stimulus at a time of high unemployment
- Decline in medium term activity as government spending falls to lower levels than otherwise due to 'pull forward' and resources savings effect
- Longer term increase in activity as private sector benefits and responds to infrastructure improvements and lower taxes – the savings create space for more private investment.

The Centre for International Economics noted that many potential benefits were omitted from the analysis including important direct consequences such as reduced costs for private

sector from improved transport infrastructure and environmental improvements, and the private benefits of improved parks and other amenities. The economic modelling assumptions also omitted any potential demonstration effects (Working Paper 2, 16, in *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers*, 1995).

Three scenarios were modelled and sensitivity tested to account for a range of possible economic conditions: 'base, low and high case scenarios.' The modelling found the same broad pattern of expenditure shift recurring in each scenario, with mainly timing shifts and an overall difference in the cost-benefit ratio.

The model estimated cost-benefit ratios of between 2.09 (low case) – 3.5 base – and 3.93 in the high case. Cost benefit ratios produced by the model described the ratio of change to GDP over the evaluation period against the expenditures over program period. The modelling also found an estimated annual increase in employment (an estimated increase in labour demand) of between 2.43 and 5.64 thousand (Collins et al., 1995 32).

These benefits were likely to be conservative since there was no comparative assessment against other possible expenditures, or the possible benefits of:

- More money from the states and local government than would otherwise have been invested
- Bringing forward infrastructure projects, or commissioning projects which would never otherwise have got off the ground
- Private sector investment and urban renewal developments because of removed impediments and improved infrastructure
- Land value rise due to transport and other infrastructure.

5.3 Affordable housing and social justice

The effectiveness of the Building Better Cities program at delivering social justice outcomes was mixed, and the mid-stream evaluation judged it to be 'reasonably successful' (Collins et al., 1995 58).

Increasing the supply of affordable housing was the key approach to delivering social justice improvements, although improved access to public transport and the upgrade of declining public housing stock were also important in many area strategies. The Building Better Cities objective of increasing housing density and using existing infrastructure was also intended to provide increased access to housing, employment and social services.

The Australian National Audit Office field work confirmed that, overall, the program was well directed and likely to achieve the projected results. However, affordable housing was an area in which some poor performance was identified. The Australian National Audit Office found that the range of housing affordability strategies implemented under the program had little impact on, and were limited by their lack of integration with, Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements policies and programs. In one specific case, it noted, a social housing project was dropped without replacement and funds from the sale of government land into private hands for a luxury development were not reinvested to further Building Better Cities objectives (ANAO, 1996 52).

Explicit affordable housing objectives were included in 22 of the 26 Area Strategies, and one which did not (Elizabeth Munno Para) because it was focused instead on upgrading existing public housing and setting up mechanisms to encourage low income home ownership (Collins et al., 1995 61-2).

On the affordable housing strategies, Collins et al commented that 'not all are innovative and clearly not all will be successful', however inclusionary zoning and new organisational models of development and management (both used for example in Ultimo Pyrmont) had

national demonstration significance. Collins et al also found that in some Areas, local officials lacked understanding or commitment to the social justice objectives.

5.3.1 Affordable Housing in East Perth

In East Perth the Commonwealth intervened to increase the area's commitment to affordable housing. Conversely, state officials commented that the Commonwealth's social justice objectives were unclear and changed over time (Collins et al., 1995 58-9).

One of the only two pieces of independent academic research on Building Better Cities, the work by Emily Crawford on the East Perth Building Better Cities Area Strategy, found that the strategy failed to deliver on its social justice objectives.

The East Perth Area Strategy agreement included the construction of 96 social housing homes by Homeswest, but Crawford found that only 56 units of public housing had been built. In a total estimated redevelopment of 1 500 dwellings, social housing comprised around 4 per cent. Crawford found that the private market also failed to deliver affordable housing, with median East Perth real estate in 2000 at \$263 731 compared to an average of \$152 200 for metropolitan Perth (Crawford, 2003 85).

Crawford identified three inter-related causes for this failure:

- The lack of a specific quota or proportion of land allocated to affordable housing in the Area Strategy
- Conflict between the goals of attracting private investment and provision of affordable housing and diverse social mix, leading to exclusion of social housing authorities
- The lack of Commonwealth-specified quantitative and qualitative measures against which outcomes could be measured and states held accountable, most likely a result of political sensitivities in the Federal–State partnership.

5.3.2 Hotham Estate, North Melbourne

In contrast, the Auditor-General of Victoria found evidence that the Building Better Cities improvement of public housing north of Melbourne was successful in contributing to social justice outcomes. The redevelopment of the Hotham estate north of Melbourne almost delivered its target of 215 units, achieving 205 with the remaining 9 to be constructed on an alternative site due to higher than expected construction costs. The Auditor-General found that not only did the redevelopment improve the quality of the units relative to the rest of the Hotham estate, but also compared to other public housing in Melbourne more generally.

The project included the introduction of streets to integrate the units with the surrounding suburb to reduce stigmatisation, security measures and stock diversification. It was therefore considered successful in demonstrating a new model for such redevelopment (AGV, 1996 58-60).

5.4 Environmentally sustainable development (ESD)

As part of the Collins et al national evaluation, Tor Hundloe and Geoff MacDonald were commissioned to evaluate the Ecologically Sustainable Development Related Achievement of the Better Cities (Working Paper 1 *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers*, 1995). They reviewed all 26 Area Strategies based on the State evaluation reports and discussions with Building Better Cities coordinators in all the states and territories. The evaluation was an appraisal with respect to Area Strategies rather than an on-site audit.

The evaluation was directed to consider the following specific elements:

- Improvements to, and increased use of, public transport
- Improved pedestrian/cycle access

- The impact of urban consolidation, particularly on land take requirements
- Improved sewerage/wastewater treatment
- Reduction of pollution (air, noise, water, litter)
- Improvements in processes and treatment of contaminated sites
- Energy efficiency, particularly in regard to transport and housing
- Protection of biodiversity and heritage.

While finding that virtually all the elements of the Area Strategies could contribute to ecologically sustainable development outcomes many did so indirectly and, in isolation, may have lacked effectiveness. For example, better footpaths may not have reduced pollution and energy use if there was no financial or other incentive to avoid car use.

In summary, the review by Hundloe and MacDonald found that (Collins et al., 1995 50-3):

- The Building Better Cities program emphasis on cross-functional and inter-governmental coordination was strongly aligned with ESD principles. They found consistent evidence from senior state officials that the program demonstrated the benefits of integrated planning and the breakdown of silo-thinking
- The Building Better Cities addressed the identified national priority urban issues for ESD³, particularly urban consolidation, higher residential densities and transport efficiencies including reduced car dependence
- ESD was not the driving force in the creation or selection of Area Strategies and was in some cases 'retrofitted'. The input of the Commonwealth Task Force and the State Better Cities committee was influential in ensuring ESD was built into Area Strategies
- Urban stormwater and waste water projects directly addressed high priority ESD issues and had valuable demonstration potential
- Building Better Cities was influential in promoting the adoption of ESD principles and changing agency cultures, but the strategies were not particularly innovative on a technical level
- Evaluation and monitoring of ESD outcomes were the least satisfactory element of the program. This was partly due to the poor quality of baseline environmental data for Australian cities.

Some evidence of Building Better Cities' impact on environmentally sustainable development was found by the Auditor-General of Victoria in the South East Area Strategy. It was reported that electrification of the Cranbourne lines showed early signs of increasing public transport usage, possibly increasing labour mobility as intended. The Public Transport Corporation had compiled initial estimates that weekly rail patronage increased from 8 000 in June 1995 to 10 000 in March 1996, and that cars parked at the Cranbourne and Merinda Park stations had increased by approximately 80 per cent between April 1995 and March 1996 (Auditor-General of Victoria, 1996 65).

³ As documented in the 1992 *National Strategy for Ecologically Sustainable Development*

6 Lessons from the field

6.1 Selected area strategies in New South Wales

The following section presents published information from the UTS 1996 seminars which reported on the experience of the four NSW area strategies: Ultimo-Pyrmont, Honeysuckle, Transit West and Eveleigh.

These reports are not independently verified research findings, but they do offer the rarely available detail of a 'first person account' which was a useful balance to the cautious formality required by the government published, formal evaluations.

These accounts highlighted the significance of an initial capital investment and the three interrelated mechanisms of a time-limited, outcome-tied agreement, a geographic boundary and private/community involvement, which operated within Building Better Cities to leverage the initial capital into a more substantial urban intervention.

6.1.1 *Ultimo-Pyrmont*

Alan Davidson, Manager City West Planning Branch, NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning, described what happened in Ultimo Pyrmont (Dawkins et al., 1996 43-50).

Davidson noted that, while planning for urban renewal in Ultimo Pyrmont had started in 1988, Building Better Cities catalysed the developments and supported cross-functional and inter-governmental cooperation which would not have otherwise occurred:

The program provided a philosophical umbrella, the up-front capital impetus for it to happen at the time it did, and also a methodology for a partnership between the Commonwealth, state, local government, private sector and the community. Better Cities crystallised what the state government, local councils and the community had been working on for about four years. (Dawkins et al., 1996 43)

Planning mechanisms and tools were very important in what he called the methodology for partnership. These included the regional environmental plan, urban development plan, master plans, the affordable housing program, and the public domain strategy.

The area had an original population of 3 190 in 1991 and a target of creating residential accommodation for 8 500 people.

Between June 1992 and July 1996 (Dawkins et al., 1996 47):

- 3 013 new dwellings were approved, of which 2 597 under construction or completed
- 247 121 square metres of new business floor space were approved, with 167 935 square metres under construction or completed.

Davidson reported that infrastructure provision in advance of demand had accelerated demand: 'Arguably it has created its own market by way of certainty and quality' (Dawkins et al., 1996 47).

The Area Strategy resulted in new roads, hydraulic infrastructure and public domain, upgraded infrastructure, high density development, and the rationalising of surplus land holdings which increased the use of existing infrastructure.

The Strategy implemented improvements to all transport modes – light rail, ferry wharf, bicycle routes, and improved bus services. Zoning was used to encourage and maintain social mix, while the affordable housing program was set to provide 600 units and public housing to provide 100 units suitable for lower income earners.

A survey of new residents to the area identified that accessibility and centrality were the key attractions for moving,⁴ and found the following characteristics (Dawkins et al., 1996 47-49):

- Nearly a third (30 per cent) of new residents moved from other parts of metropolitan Sydney and 17 per cent from inner Sydney
- The largest group of new households were couples with no children (32 per cent), followed by group households (28 per cent) and singles (26 per cent). There were few children and seniors amongst new residents
- Two thirds (65 per cent) of new residents were employed full time (26 per cent in recreational and personal services and 23 per cent in financial services)
- Overall the income level mix was equivalent to inner Sydney in 1991, while ethnic mix was high and remained similar to proportions prior to 1991.

These preliminary data seem to indicate a degree of gentrification occurred, however the actual achievement (or not) of accessibility and social mix could only be assessed over a longer time frame.

The survey also found indicators of reduced car dependence including (Dawkins et al., 1996 47-9):

- Short journeys to work – 17 per cent of new residents working in Ultimo-Pyrmont, and 46 per cent in the Central Business District
- Significant modal share of journeys to work – 20 per cent walked, 21 per cent caught a bus, 1.3 per cent rode by bicycle, and 22 per cent used light rail, monorail or ferry
- Low car ownership: 38 per cent new households didn't have a car whilst 44 per cent had only one vehicle
- Popularity of the light rail – only 9 per cent of new residents did not plan to use it.

Davidson reported that, without Building Better Cities, the redevelopment would have occurred but without the coordination required to facilitate eight government agencies trying to achieve planning controls. Secondly, key infrastructure would not have been funded ahead of demand and therefore would not have catalysed private sector investment. Finally, Davidson reported that gentrification would have been a problem. There would have been no affordable housing mechanism or human services planning, and there would have been reduced accessibility due to delayed (or no) public transport provision (Dawkins et al., 1996 49-50).

This final point is important to note, because although we know that in at least one Area Strategy (East Perth) gentrification was accelerated, this is evidence that the explicit social justice outcome-focus (where it functioned) did produce better outcomes.

In conclusion, Davidson stated that the program 'certainly provided the coordination process that is hoped for in urban management' and generated 'clear evidence that the methodology is useable in metropolitan planning processes (Dawkins et al., 1996 50).

6.1.2 Honeysuckle, Newcastle

The achievements of Building Better Cities in Honeysuckle were reported by Garry Fielding, Director of Planning, City of Newcastle, NSW (Dawkins et al., 1996 59-63).

The Honeysuckle Area Strategy sought to revitalise the Newcastle central business district in the context of urban decline and a population decline of some 30 000 people since the Second World War. The population was moving from the core to the periphery, evidenced by the growth of several regional shopping centres on the urban fringe.

⁴ New resident data obtained from Garry Cox & Stacey Miers *Post occupancy survey of new residents to Ultimo-Pyrmont* (DUAP 1996).

The Area Strategy included adaptive re-use of industrial buildings, links between the CBD and the waterfront and 'urban village' developments to revitalise 'declining inner areas at a human scale' (Dawkins et al., 1996 60).

Honeysuckle focused largely on a housing development strategy with more than \$100 million spent or earmarked for inner city medium or high density housing developments, with some of it demonstrating residential mixed use. On completion, the residential developments were expected to accommodate a workforce of over 5 000 people.

The strategy was jointly delivered by Honeysuckle Development Corporation and a local council committee. The strategy included \$12.5 million for an Affordable housing program to deliver between 125 and 159 new rental dwellings for low income earners, and \$7.0 million for community and special needs housing (Dawkins et al., 1996 60).

Gerner's independent analysis found mixed outcomes from these developments. He found that the student housing behind Wickham School was successful, but the units in Bishopgate and Railway Streets, Honeysuckle were poor examples of affordable housing (Gerner, 1996 298).

Fielding reported that 'there has been a very good private sector response which shows no sign of waning' (Dawkins et al., 1996 62), though no further evidence was provided. Clearly there had been a local stimulus effect with 80% of construction carried out by local companies.

Fielding emphasised the way Building Better Cities generated innovation in the coordination and planning processes and how this led to a leveraging of the up-front government investment. He commented:

The process issues have been very important to the strategy, and the strategy has stressed a partnership between the three tiers of government, but also the private sector and the community.' (Dawkins et al., 1996 63)

The Area Strategy included a strong focus on community participation through a series of workshops and site tours, open days, briefings of local politicians, media statements, meetings with local press. Fielding reported that Building Better Cities Honeysuckle demonstrated that 'government, business and the community can together identify critical urban issues and problems and together seek to achieve a shared vision and objectives for addressing those urban issues' (Dawkins et al., 1996 63).

At an intra-governmental level, Fielding reported that coordination and planning led to better use of funds through the integration of budgets and policies:

Honeysuckle has demonstrated how relatively wide benefits around a relatively modest budget can be achieved by integrating policy and budgets across different government sectors. (Dawkins et al., 1996 63)

Similar internal leveraging was reported by the Transit West Area Strategy which was focused on transport improvements.

6.1.3 Transit West, Blacktown

At the UTS seminar, John Smith, Executive Director of Transport Planning, NSW Department of Transport reported on the progress of Transit West (Dawkins et al., 1996 65-68). For Sydney's West, Building Better Cities provided an opportunity to bring forward some long-planned rail infrastructure investment, and also created the impetus and support for coordinated planning which leveraged the up-front government contribution.

The Transit West strategy was designed in the context of low density residential development at the edge of Sydney, leading to viability issues of public transport provision and was centred on major investment in rail – the Parramatta Y link.

Smith provided two examples of how Building Better Cities money was leveraged with a range of 'add ons'. Thus in Blacktown what would have been a standard bus/rail interchange project of \$4 million was leveraged to a project worth nearly \$25 million by connecting it to the redevelopment of the railway station, other Blacktown redevelopments including road work and bus priority works, and potential commercial precincts. Smith claimed that Blacktown station was set to become the highest patronage station in the entire network by 2011.

Similarly, the Parramatta Y link was implemented along with a range of broader system ranges, including signalling improvements, to improve the overall operational environment and services throughout the west of Sydney.

Smith noted that the 'infrastructure investment has led to a whole bunch of other opportunities and other decisions.' He referred to the phenomenon as 'packaging':

Packaging is about getting agencies and councils and others together at the same place at one time to pull together investments that make sense, that make each other's investment work, and that's leveraging up the sort of investment that is made. (Dawkins et al., 1996 68)

Smith reported that the lessons learnt through Building Better Cities had subsequently been applied to generate this 'packaging' benefit at a Liverpool bus/rail interchange. The site development was used as an anchor for a range of complementary community amenity and safety features including a child care centre, educational facility, community input on women's safety, and links to the commercial centre.

Finally, Smith highlighted the importance of tight, persistent project management to deliver these leveraging benefits by keeping the elements together. The project management kept people motivated and committed to the (not always easy) collaborative process.

6.1.4 *Eveleigh, Redfern*

An example of leveraging private sector involvement through a focus on business development was provided by Area Strategy for Eveleigh, NSW. Tom Forgan, CEO Australian Technology Park, Sydney reported on the effects of Building Better Cities in Eveleigh (Dawkins et al., 1996 51-58).

While the Technology Park idea already had some backing from three universities, Forgan stated that the development would not have 'got off the ground' without Building Better Cities, particularly because the funding and commitment facilitated access to other sources of support.

The fourteen hectare disused site was developed into a world leading model for technology incubator parks, with a very strong community integration focus through public recreation facilities and an educational component.

Forgan reported that Building Better Cities funded paving, lighting, seating and infrastructure and assisted the project to leverage other contributions including \$700 000 from Telstra in funding their own infrastructure, Sydney Electricity and AGL contributed their own infrastructure, local council rates exemption and \$22.0 million from the state government to refurbish the National Innovation Centre building (Dawkins et al., 1996 56).

In 2009, the Park was reported to have more than 100 tenant companies with 1 200 employees currently and 8 000 predicted by 2010.⁵

⁵ <http://www.atp.com.au/> Accessed 12.3.09.

6.2 Comparative study – public housing renewal

Despite significant evaluative difficulties, one of the strengths of the Building Better Cities evidence base was its national scope, as compared to the even more fragmented state of the evidence on public housing estate renewal in Australia (Judd & Randolph, 2006). In their 2006 paper on public housing renewal, Judd and Randolph assessed the available evidence on estate renewal and argued for a national evaluation framework to ensure proper assessment of the effectiveness of estate renewal policies. They highlighted the strengths of qualitative evaluation methods in assessing the impact of complex policy interventions in the urban landscape.

Judd and Randolph described two categories of intervention: urban renewal and community renewal. The former includes capital investment in physical upgrades, improvements to public space and infrastructure or stock de-centralisation, while the latter focuses on social outcomes such as crime prevention, tenant employment and training, and can include specialised tenancy management initiatives and community involvement in the renewal project (Judd & Randolph, 2006 100).

Judd and Randolph defined estate renewal as a coordinated and spatially targeted set of physical, social and housing management interventions intended to address the problems arising from spatially concentrated socio-economic disadvantage and the physical decline of public housing estates.

They noted that Australian public housing renewal programs have to date focused on asset improvement and housing management outcomes, and this has meant that evaluation methods are dominated by quantitative methodologies. Judd and Randolph identify a number of limitations to a purely quantitative approach to evaluating urban renewal:

- Lack of specificity and measurability of urban renewal objectives
- The problem of gathering spatially defined data that relate to estate boundaries and therefore to the renewal program objectives
- Poor definition of short and longer term objectives and outcomes
- Lack of baseline data and benchmarks needed to generate quantifiable targets
- Difficulties with causality and additionality (the component of change over and above what would have occurred without the intervention).

Key amongst these concerns was the problem of attributing causality and additionality to a spatially targeted intervention. The processes and forces influencing an area are complex and well beyond any particular intervention, and consequently it is difficult to isolate the cause of a specific quantified change, and attribute it to the urban renewal program.

Qualitative evaluation, Judd and Randolph argue, is particularly suited to investigating such complex causal processes and can offer explanations for the trends identified in quantitative data. Combining quantitative and qualitative methods can aid in the shift from assessment of *outputs* to the evaluation of broader *outcomes* which was increasingly recognised as evaluative best practice, and can also aid in new and emerging evaluation approaches, for example the 'realist' focus on *how* and *why* a program works.

Judd and Randolph also argue that qualitative evaluation is a cost-effective comparative strategy particularly given the practical difficulties of extracting comparable inter-state quantitative data, and in fact the review found that all between state evaluations to date rely on qualitative methodologies.

Judd and Randolph noted that few estate renewal evaluations include a baseline study against which changes can be measured, and typically commence late into or after the program's implementation.

Their key finding was that any future nationally driven urban renewal program should include an evaluation component that:

- a) Features a baseline study
- b) Is guided by a national evaluation framework to ensure effective comparisons between sites
- c) Incorporates a balance of quantitative and qualitative measures.

6.3 Comparative study – private sector financing

A UK study into the private financing of urban regeneration activities investigated reasons for investing in urban regeneration, project evaluation criteria, and factors which could increase the level of private sector finance.

The study found that financial return was the key criteria for investment, that specific risk-reduction measures were sought by companies, and that grant programs provide a 'cushioning effect' during a property downturn (Adair, Berry, McGreal, Deddis, & Hirst, 1999).

The study interviewed senior representatives from 108 investors with a record of involvement in urban regeneration, including property development (51 per cent of respondents), property investment companies (27 per cent) and other institutional investors.

The study found that urban regeneration financing was not generally tied to local sources because most companies invested beyond their local areas. Over the 1980s they found that grant-based measures were significantly more effective than fiscal measures for involving private investment. The two grant-based programs that they assessed were shown to provide a 'cushioning effect' during the property market downturn (1989-94), and the proportion of companies involved in urban regeneration increased during this period, from 57 to 78 per cent.

The study found a marked shift toward the lower end of the investment range during the economic downturn which continued in the period 1995-96. The analysis also found a shift away from large 'flagship' projects toward smaller-value, lower risk projects.

The critical reason for holding urban regeneration investments is the expectation of higher than average returns, with diversification of risk a secondary factor. Social or community reasons and company image had no influence on the decision (Adair et al., 1999 2040).

The analysis found that rental growth/occupier demand and capital appreciation/ investor demand are the key selection criteria for companies, implying that urban regeneration investments are evaluated and selected primarily on standard commercial grounds. Secondary criteria included long-term sustainability, construction and land costs, neighbouring environment quality and site assembly/land packaging costs. The availability of grants, partnership structures and taxation breaks were insignificant influences on investment decisions. However, nearly eighty per cent of respondents specified risk-reduction requirements for urban regeneration projects: these included grant-aid, secure pre-lets, forward funding, rental guarantees and taxation incentives.

For increasing private sector investment, funding initiatives were most significant for respondents, including procedural clarity and simplified administration of grants. Interest in long-term tax breaks was low and statistically insignificant, however contamination remediation was considered to be a potentially major influence.

The research also found a range of non-financial instruments which were considered relatively significant for increasing the flow of private sector funds: guaranteed minimum infrastructure standard, policy and procedural clarity, alignment with commercial priorities and requirements, and simplified planning and land assembly processes.

7 Conclusion

The key effect of the Building Better Cities program was to multiply the impact of a given injection of infrastructure funding on urban redevelopment, through the enforcement of cross-sector planning and implementation using a coordinated, geographic and time-limited, outcome-oriented funding agreement.

Of critical importance was that Building Better Cities was a *multi*-mechanism intervention. It produced its effects through four, inter-related mechanisms:

1. **Significant capital investment**
2. **Use of a time-limited outcome-tied agreement** with regular reporting against multiple outcomes – economic efficiency, environmental sustainability and social justice
3. **Use of a geographic boundary** to generate coordination in planning and implementation between actors:
 - a. Levels of government
 - b. Local functional authorities
4. **Private sector and community involvement**
 - a. Creating the conditions for private sector investment
 - b. Consultation and governance models.

All four mechanisms were necessary to produce the unique potential effect of the Building Better Cities program. This potential effect – the ability to multiply the impact of a given capital injection for the purposes of urban redevelopment – was mediated in practice by local conditions and contingencies which affected the outcome of the program.

Some of these contextual mediating effects have been identified in the literature and detailed in this synthesis report, although it is clear that more detail would emerge from further primary research. Key amongst them is the capacity to lead, support and sustain the collaborative planning and implementation processes, including skills in conflict resolution.

Brian Howe has emphasised that capital investment, rather than recurrent funding, was chosen to facilitate the leveraging effect because Building Better Cities was intended to create the conditions for further private and public sector investment. He cited the Gold Coast Corridor as an example, claiming that by linking the labour markets of Brisbane and the Gold Coast through (amongst other elements) rail transport infrastructure, the Area Strategy stimulated subsequent 'massive private sector investment in Robina' (Dawkins et al., 1996 19).

The evidence presented in the available literature demonstrated that Building Better Cities was able to create the right conditions for private sector involvement in many of the Area Strategies. In fact in some areas, for example East Perth, gentrification demonstrated a level of private investor involvement perhaps to the detriment of social justice outcomes.

Proponents repeatedly suggested that Building Better Cities allowed projects that had long been planned, but not been able to proceed, to go ahead. It also ensured that coordinated planning was undertaken and sustained.

Ultimately, however, Building Better Cities was at its core about inspiring the community across all sectors toward creative solutions to urban management problems. As Brian Howe put it:

Better Cities was designed to demonstrate positively what could be done, not with single projects but with cooperation between governments, focusing on an area which faced a problem or set of problems which also represented an opportunity. [...]

The potential is only limited by our imagination and our vision. Better Cities was about simply demonstrating that.

Better Cities has spawned a number of experiments that are essentially about lateral thinking, about seeing visions across a range of issues and portfolios and levels of government, so that the focus becomes the area or the community rather than the policy sub-system. (Dawkins et al., 1996 20)

Yet the synthesis of literature has not found convincing evidence that the program achieved leverage through demonstration effects. Both the Australian National Audit Office and Collins et al evaluations agree that the demonstration mechanisms could have been better resourced and organised. The Australian National Audit Office specifically identified a gap in the promotion of housing innovations, and highlighted the importance of raising public awareness and acceptance of higher housing densities to foster demand (ANAO, 1996 56).

A more recent assessment also suggests that the Building Better Cities demonstration effect has not been widely successful. Reporting to the 2006 Australian State of the Environment Committee, Associate Professor Michael Buxton (RMIT) was disappointed by Australian attempts to encourage urban consolidation. Buxton concluded:

Governments generally have not understood the need to integrate residential development, employment location and transport systems across capital cities. They are creating two city types: service rich, higher income inner and middle suburbs; and service poor, lower income outer urban areas. (Buxton, 2006 3)

Buxton identified a national underfunding of public transport and a lack of regulatory constraint to be the primary causes. He found that while many states have urban consolidation targets, 'no state government has limited land supply in outer urban areas or required increased average residential densities there' (Buxton, 2006 1,3).

Buxton principally called for increased government intervention through land use planning processes. However, the effectiveness of Building Better Cities at leveraging diverse inputs does suggest that this strategy may be more cost-effective than a purely regulatory approach.

Buxton's assessment provides suggestive confirmation that the leverage achieved by the Building Better Cities intervention was achieved through the identified mechanisms rather than demonstration effects. Without those active elements, the examples provided by the Area Strategies did not generally produce change elsewhere.

For Neilson, confidence was the most significant factor in producing Building Better Cities leverage, particularly in the private sector:

You can actually see the confidence of the private sector investing in these areas. Because of the cooperation of the three levels of government and shared objectives, and a capacity to talk to the private sector directly and with purpose, there is confidence.... There is nothing more certainty-creating than seeing governments put their money where their mouth is and in this case I think they all did effectively. (Dawkins et al., 1996 41-42)

It is possible that insufficient effort was expended in demonstration activities, although, as discussed above, some state agencies dispute this judgement. But it is more likely to be because without the complementary driving mechanisms described in this synthesis, demonstration effects are unlikely to produce significant concrete change.

It is also plausible that demonstration effects are impossible to measure. The evidence in many of these sources provides an indication that this intangible effect nonetheless constitutes an important outcome of the program.

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Appendix A Commonwealth expenditure

Commonwealth funds for Building Better Cities were allocated on a per capita basis. The following table shows the allocation for each state and territory.

Building Better Cities Commonwealth funds allocation	
State/Territory	\$ million
New South Wales	278.1
Victoria	209.0
Queensland	139.4
Western Australia	78.3
South Australia	68.7
Tasmania	21.7
Northern Territory	7.5
Australian Capital Territory	13.7
Total	816.4

Source: Australian National Audit Office, 1996 9

The table below presents Commonwealth expenditure by category and was extracted from the *Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers*, Economic Impact (Working Paper 2). Expenditure was considered notional because the funds were provided as untied capital grants.

Construction constituted 93.2 per cent of the total expenditure. Within this allocation, a third was invested in both transport (33.5 per cent) and residential housing & infrastructure (32.5%), one fifth was allocated to non-residential buildings and infrastructure (21.4 per cent), and one twentieth to public open space (5.7 per cent).

By way of context, the total five year expenditure on Better Cities was less than 40 per cent of the annual Commonwealth spending on direct housing assistance (Collins et al., 1995 61).

Notional breakdown of Commonwealth government expenditure		
	\$ million	%
Construction		
Drainage/sewerage	86.8	10.6
Residential subdivision	22.3	2.7
Residential housing	156.4	19.2
Rail	115.9	14.2
Road	67.1	8.2
Transport interchange	79.8	9.8
Transport interchange and road	10.5	1.3
Parks/gardens/mariner	46.2	5.7
Mixed non-residential buildings	92.7	11.4
Mixed non-residential subdivisions	82	10
Harbours/ports	0.7	0.1
Equipment design		
Bus design /manufacturing R& D	0.1	
Acquisitions		
Land/buildings	15	1.8
Bus fleet	1.4	0.2
Studies/administration/services		
Planning studies/business services/administration	38.3	4.7
Finance		
Housing finance	1.3	0.2
Total	816.4	100

Source: Better Cities Evaluation Volume II: Background Working Papers, Working Paper 2, page 2

Appendix B Overview of Area Strategies

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)												
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio													
NSW	4 area strategies	\$278.1 million (total Commonwealth funds)															
	Ultimo-Pyrmont	117.04	124.2	0.9	<p>Increased residential and employment density with good access to the CBD including new public transport route; waterfront restoration and community open space</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Light rail</td> <td>40.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Periphery road</td> <td>17.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Affordable housing</td> <td>50.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Infrastructure design</td> <td>12.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Human Services</td> <td>7.7</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Program admin</td> <td>14.0</td> </tr> </table>	Light rail	40.0	Periphery road	17.0	Affordable housing	50.0	Infrastructure design	12.0	Human Services	7.7	Program admin	14.0
Light rail	40.0																
Periphery road	17.0																
Affordable housing	50.0																
Infrastructure design	12.0																
Human Services	7.7																
Program admin	14.0																
	Transit West, Blacktown	78.82	75.5	1.0	<p>Facilitate growth of Parramatta as a second CBD though public transport improvements</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Planning & management</td> <td>0.72</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Rail improvements</td> <td>96.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Bus priority</td> <td>53.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Blacktown interchange</td> <td>4.0</td> </tr> </table>	Planning & management	0.72	Rail improvements	96.0	Bus priority	53.6	Blacktown interchange	4.0				
Planning & management	0.72																
Rail improvements	96.0																
Bus priority	53.6																
Blacktown interchange	4.0																
	Honeysuckle, Newcastle	71.0	28.117	2.5	<p>Develop underutilised government land (previously rail and port uses) for mixed use; public foreshore access; revitalise Newcastle CBD (adjoining area)</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Planning & management</td> <td>11.90</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing</td> <td>24.847</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport</td> <td>15.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Site works</td> <td>47.07</td> </tr> </table>	Planning & management	11.90	Housing	24.847	Transport	15.3	Site works	47.07				
Planning & management	11.90																
Housing	24.847																
Transport	15.3																
Site works	47.07																
	Eveleigh	11.17	13.88	0.8	<p>Establish an Advanced Technology Park on disused railway site – clean up contaminants, provide infrastructure including utilities, provide community open space and facilities, conserve heritage and maximise potential for public transport use</p>												

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					Planning & management	1.0
					Site works	17.05
					Land	7.0
VIC	4 area strategies	\$209.0 million (total Commonwealth funds)				
	Plenty Road Area	97.38	52.3	1.9	Community placement and support for people with psychiatric or other disabilities; Identify and strategically release underutilised government land; promote urban consolidation with higher residential densities and mixed use development; improve public transport accessibility	
					Institutional service	52.0
					Land release	12.03
					Housing development	16.75
					Latrobe technology park	12.6
					Area coordination	4.0
	Inner Melbourne & Rivers District	34.884	46.96	0.7	Integrated approach to revitalising inner Melb; demonstrating benefits of urban consolidation, increased employment & housing density; improve public transport linkages for central city; maintain social mix	
					Lynch's Bridge	8.1
					Lynch's Bridge 2	2.5
					Land release	0.5
					City tram	6.3
					Area coordination	0.284
	South West Corridor ⁶	42.0	6.4	6.6	Urban renewal in Geelong	
					Aust Food Science Centre	18.0
					Public transport (heavy rail)	11.0
					Housing Norlane Geelong	5.3

⁶ Data obtained from (Neilson 2008 110).

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					Geelong Woolstores redevelopment	4.5
					Geelong transport interchange	2.0
					Infrastructure Werribee bio-technology precinct	1.2
	South East Corridor	34.803	34.0	1.0	Total site area of 716 sq km – enhance labour market mobility with reduced car use through effective public transport alternatives; encourage higher density housing; improve City of Dandenong employment and service self-sufficiency	
					Cranbourne Lane	27.103
					Dandenong –Pakenham rail Line	7.7
					Lyndhurst land release	?
QLD	5 area strategies	\$139.4 million (total Commonwealth funds)				
	Brisbane/Gold Coast	73.94	192.735	0.4	Bring forward capital works; develop growth management strategy and guide urban development integrated with transport & infrastructure including higher density hubs; and public housing construction	
					Albert Development control plan	0.012
					Waste water study	0.4
					Demonstration project	25
					Railway extension	196.4
					Passenger interchange	3.75
					Infrastructure funding	41.005
	Inner North East Suburbs, Brisbane	31.0	55.595	0.6	Regeneration of underutilised land including industrial and government sites; improve private sector involvement; urban consolidation and reduced sprawl	
					Light rail	7.4
					Road network	14.2
					LAT management	6.0

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					Open space/cycleway	4.0
					Sewerage	2.0
					Public utilities	4.5
					Low income housing	11.9
					Land acquisition	5.195
					Baseline studies	0.4
	Inala/Ipswich	22.925	284.394	0.1	Bring forward capital works	
					25 km 'high need' corridor; fix infrastructure deficiencies and improve public image; institutional reform programs – decentralisation of support services; relieving social impacts caused by high density of public housing in the area	
					Queensland health	217
					DFSAIA	34.044
					Housing projects	5.5
					Residential enhancement	25
					Community action	2.75
					Challinor centre	0.1
	Mackay urban consolidation	1.575	34.78	0.0	57 ha within walking distance of Mackay CBD – release of land and development of cost effective medium density housing close to existing social infrastructure	
					Railway relocation & redevelop (include site decontamination) surplus railway land; minor infrastructure upgrade to facilitate private sector redevelopment	
					Rail relocation	30.6
					Rail corridor reuse	0.005
					Residential study	0.025
					Infrastructure upgrade	1.535
					Demonstration	4.19

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)														
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio															
	South Townsville	10.0	7.09	1.4	<p>Bring forward infrastructure upgrades on 125 ha site adjacent to Townsville CBD; traffic management improvements; develop higher density housing, rationalise land use- segregate incompatible land uses and increase diversity of compatible ones</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Infrastructure upgrades</td> <td>8.405</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environment improvements</td> <td>1.925</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing projects</td> <td>4.4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Community facilities</td> <td>0.8</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Acquisition of key sites</td> <td>1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning & design studies</td> <td>0.56</td> </tr> </table>	Infrastructure upgrades	8.405	Environment improvements	1.925	Housing projects	4.4	Community facilities	0.8	Acquisition of key sites	1.0	Planning & design studies	0.56		
Infrastructure upgrades	8.405																		
Environment improvements	1.925																		
Housing projects	4.4																		
Community facilities	0.8																		
Acquisition of key sites	1.0																		
Planning & design studies	0.56																		
WA	5 area strategies	\$78.3 million (total Commonwealth funds)																	
	East Perth	43.84	58.14	0.8	<p>Revitalise inner city 120ha site 2 km east of Perth CBD. Substantially upgrade services and infrastructure and maximise use of existing infrastructure by increasing housing density - reduce traffic, increase housing choices close to CBD; increase training and employment , encourage inner city investment</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Infrastructure development</td> <td>29.652</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Inlet and greenway</td> <td>12.203</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing & related amenities</td> <td>25.265</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Environmental upgrading</td> <td>6.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Industry development</td> <td>2.5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Obsolete facilities</td> <td>8.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public transport</td> <td>18.0</td> </tr> </table>	Infrastructure development	29.652	Inlet and greenway	12.203	Housing & related amenities	25.265	Environmental upgrading	6.0	Industry development	2.5	Obsolete facilities	8.0	Public transport	18.0
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Industry development	2.5																		
Obsolete facilities	8.0																		
Public transport	18.0																		
	Stirling	13.38	14.83	0.9	<p>New employment centre</p> <p>Road works, bus interchange, sewerage facilities</p> <p>Strategic development of a regional centre, 10 km north of Perth CBD. Create a suburban employment node – reduce pressure on CBD; attention to towncentre character and design, and community services; encourage urban consolidation around the centre</p>														

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					Finalise structure plan	0.03
					Stirling Bus Interchange	10.0
					Stirling Link Road	10.58
					Sewer Pump station	1.1
					Infield reticulation	2.5
					Scarborough Beach Rd	4.0
	Bunbury	10.64	20.75	0.5	Improve labour market opportunities	
					Regional centre 180km from Perth	
					Reduce growth constraints by upgrading sewerage/waste water treatment	
					Upgrade harbour area for tourism	
					Develop medium density housing & maximise use of existing infrastructure	
					Treatment works	14.18
					Casuarina drive	1.2
					Westrail	2.0
					Marina pens	4.28
					Precinct land	0.88
					Industrial infrastructure	2.85
	Fremantle	6.75	8.699	0.8	Remove infrastructure constraints on development, particularly to support medium to high density housing; increase availability of public/private housing choices; improved land utilisation to reduce net costs of urban growth; increase involvement of private sector	
					Infrastructure planning	0.007
					Main sewers	1.0
					Hamilton Hill	1.951
					Hilton	2.413

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)		
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio			
					Palmyra	2.431	
					Construct dwellings	7.647	
	Perth Urban	43.48	54.14	0.8	Revitalise inner city areas		
					Upgrade services/infrastructure and remediate degraded land; increase housing within walking distance of CBD therefore reduce traffic; promote development of more affordable housing; increase economic activity and employment		
					Infrastructure development	29.652	
					Foreshore/inlet	12.203	
					Housing and amenities	25.265	
					Public transport	18.0	
					Industry development/env rehab works	8.5	
					Utilities	8.0	
SA	4 area strategies	\$68.7 million (total Commonwealth funds)					
	Elizabeth Munro				Upgrade infrastructure – stormwater system (innovative re-use); redevelop public housing' bus-rail interchange, improve recreational amenity; create diversity in housing tenures – reduce concentration of public housing		
	Para	16.16	176.59	0.1			
					Steponheath drain	2.0	
					Flow Control	6.73	
					Kadla Creek	1.16	
					Redev. & building	151.75	
					Special housing finance	15.44	
					Estate improvement	5.25	
					Northern Plains greening	0.4	
					Centre improvements	8.1	

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					Bus rail	1.0
	North West Sector	40.0	234.7	0.2	Establish regional centre Improved water management – reuse of stormwater and sewerage effluent by industry, use of waste water for community open spaces; pipeline to support the horticultural industry, rationalise heavy rail and road transport, improve land use (including site clean up) – encourage private sector investment	
					Stormwater management	12.0
					Sewerage management	8.0
					Transport linkage	105.7
					Port Adelaide redevelopment	15.0
					Urban development	122.5
					Forestation	11.5
	Southern Areas	8.5	22.95	0.4	Regional centre development, 30km from Adelaide. Establish services and employment hub, improve transport especially public transport; rationalise govt land holdings to support higher density; extending urban infrastructure to older coastal areas Increase employment opportunities, improve utilisation of existing social infrastructure	
					Function marketing	0.235
					Sports/cycle	3.345
					Employment strategy	1.44
					Improved amenity	0.45
					Residential intensification	9.02
					Urban form & infrastructure	5.45
					Environmental management	1.08
					Linkage transport	10.43
	Western Area	4.0	5.865	0.7	Improve transport linkages for economic advantage; decontamination of sites to create renewal opportunities; improve stormwater management; upgrade roads, increase amenity, increase	

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)	
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio		
					housing density	
					Development of Bagshaw site	0.93
					Henley Beach road	2.03
					Western Parklands	0.6
					Henley Beach road properties	0.6
					Stormwater development	0.12
					Rail site	6.6
					Amenity improvements	0.065
TAS	2 area strategies	\$21.7 million (total Commonwealth funds)				
	Launceston	10.28	13.991	0.7	Rehabilitate contaminated land, land release for housing and education; increase housing density facilitation in planning, improved stormwater management infrastructure	
					Tamar River	10.6
					Invermay rail	9.396
					Community program	4.275
	Western Shore, Hobart	11.44	69.046	0.2	Facilitate release of under-utilised and contaminated suburban land for urban consolidation; improve planning mechanisms;	
					Deinstitutionalisation and provision of community based care for people with disabilities including housing choices; increase employment and training opportunities	
					Urban consolidation	49.841
					Community program	6.375
					Aged care	10.716
					Urban management	1.205
					Sullivans cove	4.454
					Derwent River	7.895

State	Area Strategy	Funding (\$million)			Major focus and planned expenditure program (\$ millions)														
		Commonwealth	State/Local	Ratio															
NT	1 area strategy	\$7.5 million (total Commonwealth funds)																	
	Darwin	7.51	38.49	0.2	Construction of new hazardous products wharf and rehabilitation of previous sites for housing and community open space uses														
					<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Engineering design</td> <td>4.85</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Infrastructure</td> <td>3.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Petroleum storage</td> <td>19.35</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pipeline</td> <td>3.68</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Marine structure</td> <td>9.07</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Francis Bay</td> <td>6.0</td> </tr> </table>	Engineering design	4.85	Infrastructure	3.05	Petroleum storage	19.35	Pipeline	3.68	Marine structure	9.07	Francis Bay	6.0		
Engineering design	4.85																		
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Marine structure	9.07																		
Francis Bay	6.0																		
ACT	1 area strategy	\$13.7 million (total Commonwealth funds)																	
	North Canberra	13.72	58.15	0.2	Infrastructure improvement to support urban renewal														
					Increase population by more efficient use of existing social and hard infrastructure including water supply and waste water disposal														
					Public and joint venture housing projects, including accommodation to relocate institutional residents														
					<table border="1"> <tr> <td>Pilot scheme 1</td> <td>0.08</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pilot scheme 2</td> <td>1.16</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pilot scheme 3</td> <td>0.05</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Watson infrastructure</td> <td>15.17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>North Watson private</td> <td>40.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resident relocation</td> <td>0.41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Joint venture</td> <td>15.0</td> </tr> </table>	Pilot scheme 1	0.08	Pilot scheme 2	1.16	Pilot scheme 3	0.05	North Watson infrastructure	15.17	North Watson private	40.0	Resident relocation	0.41	Joint venture	15.0
Pilot scheme 1	0.08																		
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Appendix C Research Methodology

Research brief

The Major Cities Unit commissioned AHURI Research Synthesis Services to provide a desktop review of any available literature about the Building Better Cities program. The research was completed March 2009.

In addition, States and Territories and any land development agencies that were involved in the Building Better Cities Program, were requested to submit any reports and evaluations that they have may have conducted recently or in the past.

Stage one of the synthesis project presented a report and annotated bibliography in response to the following brief:

Search for and assess the relevance of the available literature, and provide a bibliography of:

- Any published reports on expenditure and outcomes (qualitative and quantitative) from the Building Better Cities program
- Cost benefit evaluations of the Building Better Cities program
- National and international literature - evaluations of relevant urban revival government projects - outcomes and drivers of outcomes, methods, approaches, challenges.

Stage two was to prepare a synthesis report, distilling evidence from a shortlist of sources identified in stage one.

This paper presents the findings of the stage two synthesis.

Scope and quality

The stage one bibliographic search confirmed that there is very little published empirical evidence about the cost-effectiveness or cost-benefit of the Building Better Cities program, and very little independent research into the program overall.

The stage two synthesis focus on distilling the available evidence about Building Better Cities from an identified shortlist of sources. These sources included three formal published evaluations of aspects of Building Better Cities performance conducted before the end of the program's lifespan, around 1995.

It also included the existing independent research which focused on urban design achievements (Gerner, 1996) and on social justice outcomes (Crawford, 2003), with some other publications dealing with the political and historical context (Dawkins, Searle, & Parham, 1996; Neilson, 2008).

It was noted in the stage one report that the bibliography omitted a range of area and state specific project status reports, newsletters and annual evaluation reports. These had been primarily used as management tool and had limited research value. It would also have required a logistically complex process to locate and obtain them all.

Also omitted were other possible sources of data which would require a more extensive and primary research process to obtain, for example parliamentary transcripts and unpublished departmental reports.

The following sources from the short list could not be obtained at the time of the stage two report:

- Alexander, I. (1994) DURD -Department of Urban and Regional Development-revisited?: federal policy initiatives for urban and regional planning 1991/ 94. *Urban Policy and Research*, 12.1: 6-26.
- National Capital Authority (1997) A report on the Commonwealth Better Cities Program 1991-1997 Vol. 1 & 2. Canberra, National Capital Authority.
- Spiller Gibbins Swan Pty Ltd in conjunction with the National Institute of Economic and Industry Research and Colliers Jardine (1995) *Better Cities Program economic impact analysis: evaluation of three area strategies - Plenty Road corridor, Melbourne, Honeysuckle and environs, Newcastle and inner north-eastern suburbs, Brisbane*. Melbourne, Spiller Gibbins Swan.
- Spiller, M. (1994) Better Cities: an experiment in accelerated urban change. *Polis* 1.

Note that both Spiller reports are summarised in Collins et al 1995.

Search method

The first stage of the project included reiterated searching using the following tools:

- academic journal databases (EBSCO Search Premier, RMIT Informit, Gale, SAGE Online)
- Libraries Australia
- general internet searching
- follow up of bibliographic references.

Search terms included combinations of: Building Better Cities, Better Cities, urban, renewal, regeneration, infrastructure, capital, investment, evaluation, policy.

Article abstracts were reviewed for initial relevance and selected sources were then categorised under the thematic headings listed below. The search also identified a body of literature which contains national and international evidence about evaluation approaches and intervention methods.

The stage one results were presented in a thematic bibliography, under the following headings:

- Any published reports on expenditure and outcomes (qualitative and quantitative) from the Building Better Cities program
- Cost benefit evaluations of the Building Better Cities program
- National and international literature - evaluations of relevant urban revival government projects - outcomes and drivers of outcomes, methods, approaches, challenges.
 - Building Better Cities policy analysis
 - Evaluation approaches
 - Australian studies of urban renewal issues
 - International studies of urban renewal issues
 - Capital investment, infrastructure, private sector involvement.