

**Social Housing for Culturally Diverse Groups**  
**A Users' and Providers' Perspective**

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy

University of Adelaide  
School of Architecture, Landscape Architecture and Urban Design

March 2009

# Abstract

At a time when Australia's immigration policy encourages greater cultural diversity, significant gaps exist in the literature and practice governing the design of housing for culturally diverse groups in South Australia. Increasing migration from Asia, Africa and the Middle East presents a number of issues for social housing designers and providers who need to be aware of the diverse needs of these groups.

This study investigates the housing requirements of several cultural groups living in South Australia and compares these needs with currently available accommodation arrangements for new migrants who are dependent on the social housing sector. The study also examines how well the designers and managers of social housing understand the specific needs of these groups. In this way the concept of culturally appropriate housing is explored in the context of the norm, the South Australian archetypal house, although the findings may be utilised by other organisations in Australia and overseas. Using this comparative approach, both similarities and mismatches in design requirements for specific groups are identified. This information is then analysed to suggest appropriate policy changes for social housing providers that would better meet the needs of culturally diverse groups living in Australia today.

The range of current literature from the United Kingdom, USA and Australia, although limited in this area of research, is investigated critically to establish a means of identifying the key factors required in the design of housing for cultural diversity. The study then examines the housing needs of Afghan, Sudanese and Iraqi residents in South Australia. A similar study conducted with key members of HousingSA, who design and deliver social housing in the State, obtains an understanding of their awareness of the importance of design issues for culturally diverse groups. Finally, the social housing options available to culturally diverse groups in South Australia are investigated through an analysis of existing HousingSA house designs.

The findings give an insight into how current social housing in South Australia meets the needs of a range of culturally diverse groups, while also achieving the broad objectives of HousingSA. Areas needing attention are identified, in terms of the physical design of housing and the delivery process, as are possible changes to existing policies and procedures to assist architects, managers and service delivery professionals in providing social housing for cultural diversity. It is hoped that, through the study of housing needs and practice, this thesis will contribute relevant literature to inform housing policy makers and providers in this field.

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## Statement of Originality

This thesis contains no material that has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma in any other university and that to the best of my knowledge and belief the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text of the thesis.

I consent to the thesis being made available for photocopying and loan if accepted for the award of the degree.

Michael Findlay

# Acknowledgements

My thanks go to my supervisors, Dr. Susan Shannon and Dr. Peter Scriver for their comments and encouragement during the preparation of this thesis. During the course of the study I also corresponded with Sunand Prasad in the United Kingdom who was central in the preparation of the design guide *Accommodating Diversity* to which constant reference is made in this thesis. In addition to providing an update on designing for cultural groups in the United Kingdom since the design guide was published, Sunand also provided contacts whom I visited in 2006 for further background and to view completed projects, most notably those by Mode1-Architects in London.

In Adelaide I am indebted to a number of people who provided contacts in the three communities being researched and in particular Ross Portolesi of the Department for Families and Communities (DFC) Refugee Branch, Christine Loveday of the Australian Refugee Association and Bohran Saaid and Hussein Raziat of the South Australian Migrant Resource Centre. Further, Arkangelo Mayol of HousingSA arranged a venue and acted as interpreter in the two workshops with the Sudanese Elders and Sudanese Women, and without whose help these workshops would not have been possible.

Nagita Kagwa, Sameer Saaid and Anisar Yassar all of the DFC Refugee Branch piloted the draft questionnaire for cultural groups and many changes were made as a result of their comments to make it more culturally appropriate for the groups being interviewed. I also greatly appreciated the help and assistance given me by Dr. Debbie Faulkner of the University of South Australia for commenting on the structure of the questionnaire and providing me with an example of one she had designed.

For assistance with statistics about various cultural groups seeking social housing in South Australia through HousingSA I am indebted to David Cunnew and Nathan Lee in the Housing Policy and Community Planning area of that organisation. Similarly, access to the HousingSA plan archives assisted in providing information about existing house types.

I would also like to thank Peter Malinauskas, regional manager in the Adelaide office of HousingSA. Peter identified appropriate participants experienced in the area of housing services delivery to culturally diverse groups and made office space available in which interviews could be carried out. I would also like to acknowledge the operational managers and consultant architects who were interviewed for their openness and candid views, their willingness to participate and for later commenting on the transcripts.

Finally I would like to thank my wife, Cicely, a one-time professional editor, who tirelessly proof read the various draft chapters and final drafts, giving advice on grammar, spelling and layout.