Housing Markets and Vulnerable Neighbourhoods: The Sydney case

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This presentation:

Three main points:

- Identify the geography of neighbourhood vulnerability in Sydney

- Outline current approaches to tackling vulnerable neighbourhoods in public housing and private market areas

- Review policy responses, omissions and opportunities

Key points about vulnerable neighbourhoods in Sydney

- Growing spatial polarisation in Sydney – same as in New York and London – but Sydney is much more a 'tale of two cities'

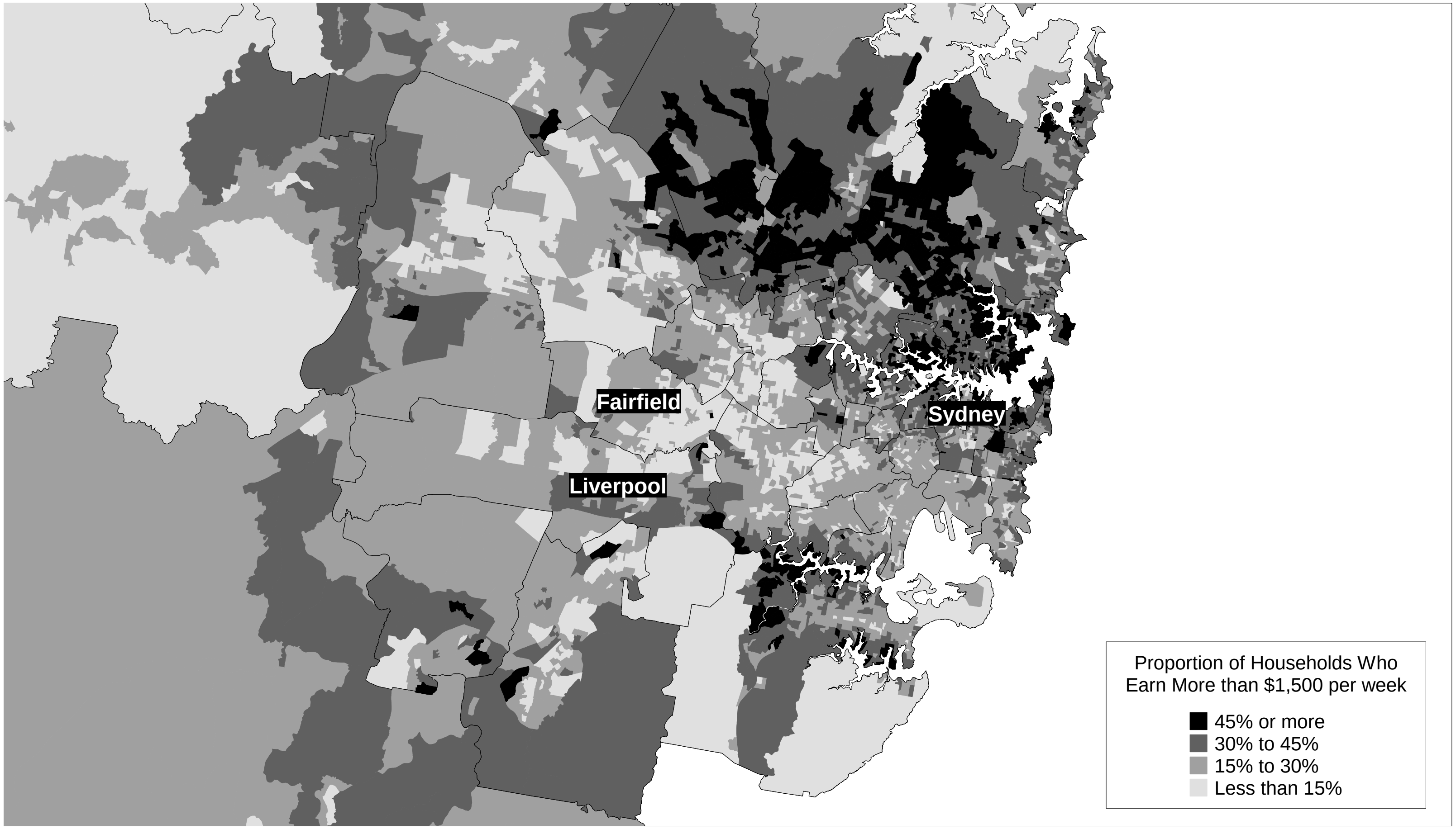
- Inner city and east/north shore has been gentrified – only a few pockets of public housing left

- Disadvantage is primarily a suburban experience in Sydney

- Edge of town 1970-1980s public housing estates built on cheap land

- 'Subsiding' middle suburban private housing areas – low value/poor quality houses ("fibro belt") and lower rental blocks of flats, recent immigrants

Sydney: Percent of households with incomes over $1,500 per week, 2001



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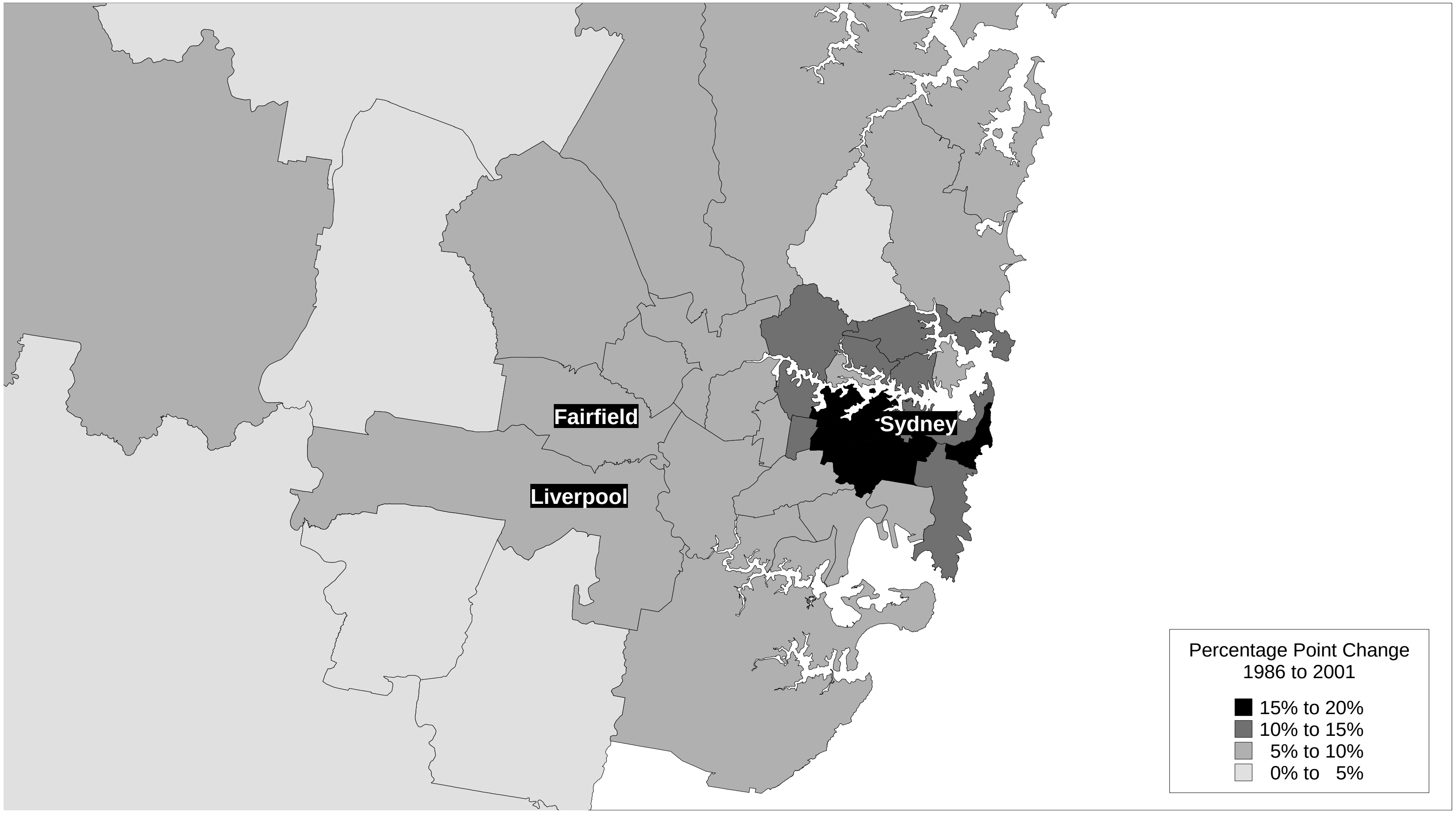
Sydney: Proportional increase in Managers and Professionals 1986 – 2001



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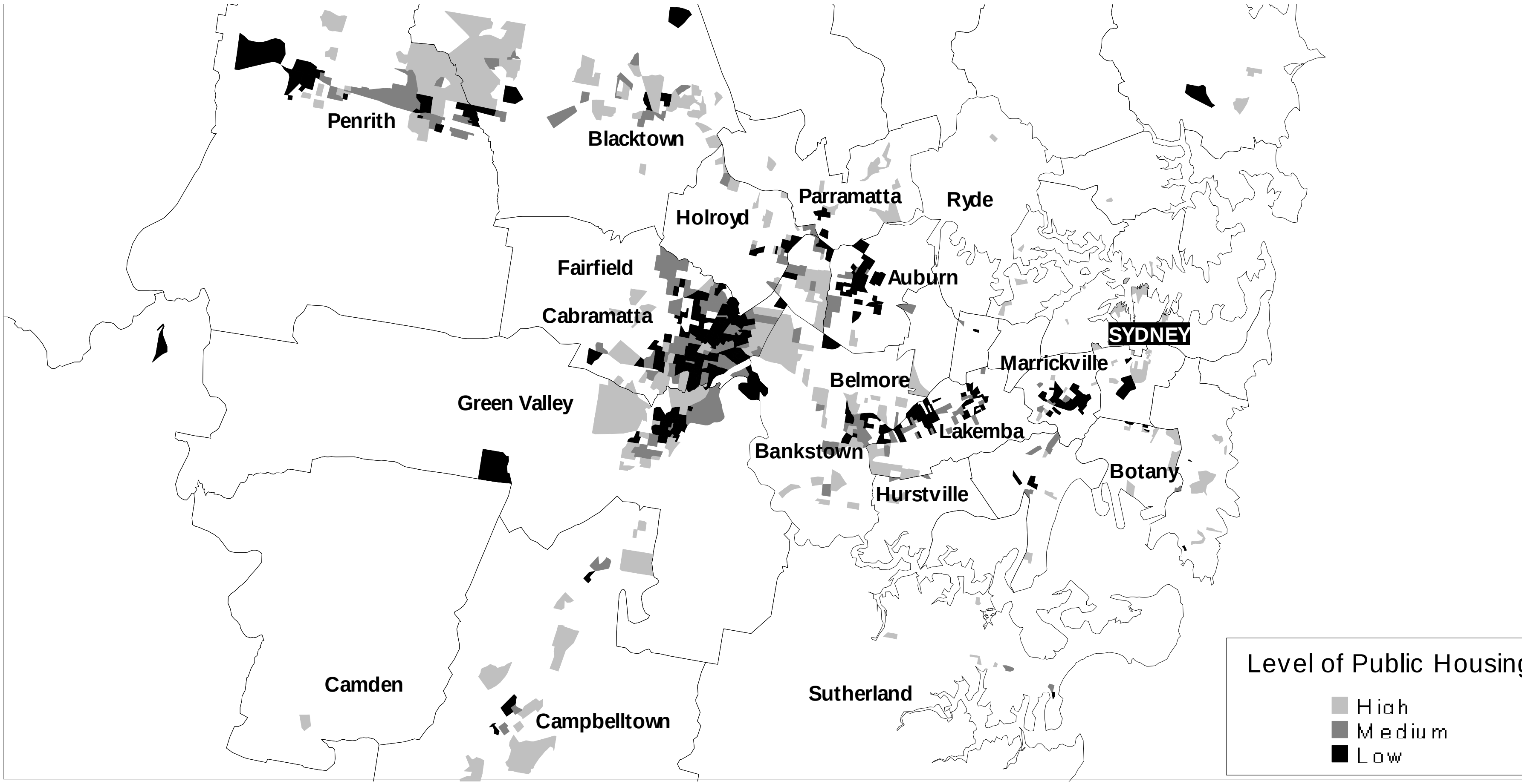
Sydney: Severely disadvantaged census tracts by housing tenure 1996



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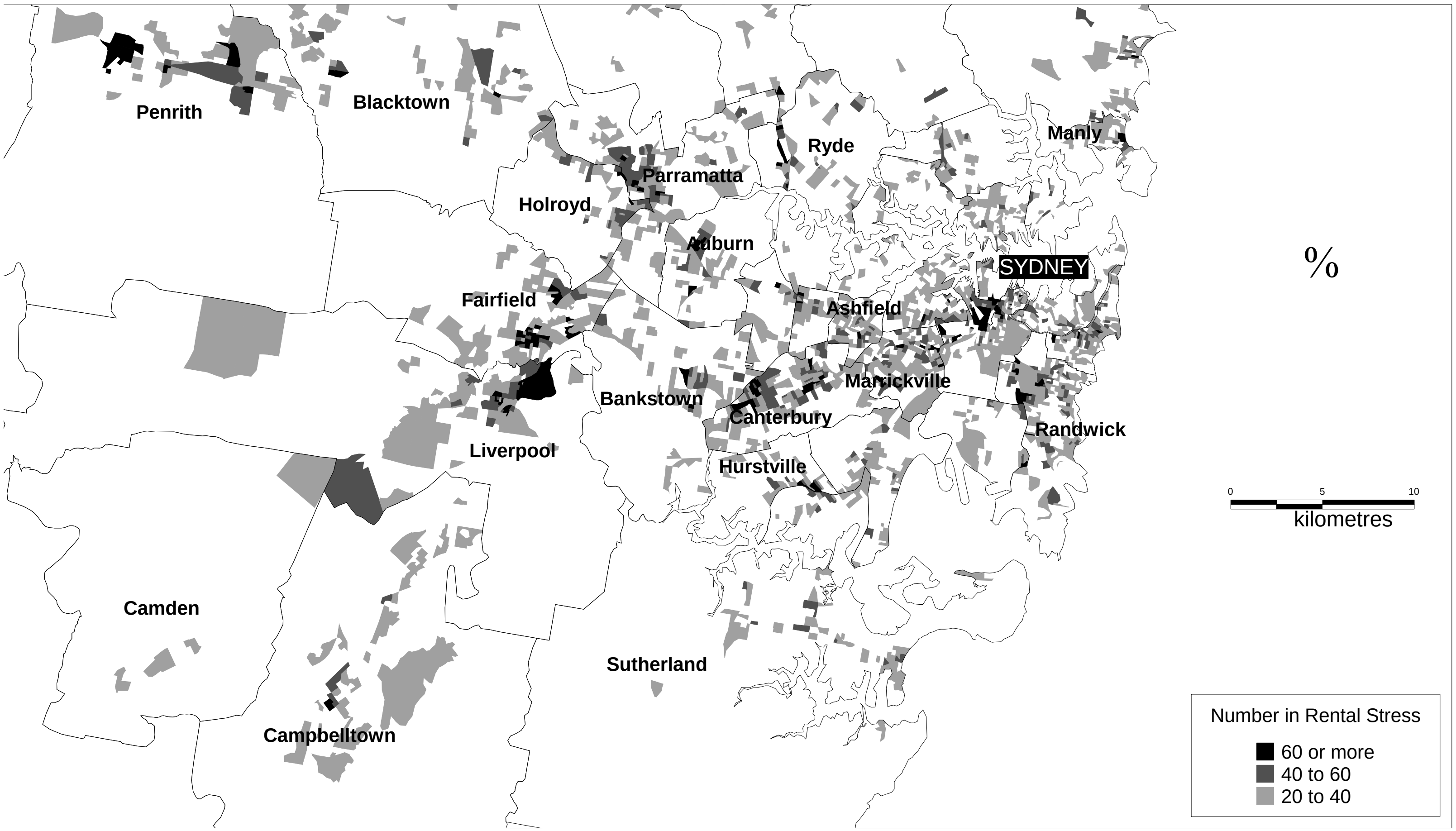
Sydney: Rental Affordability – households experiencing ‘housing stress’ by census tract, 1996



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Tackling Vulnerable Neighbourhoods in Sydney
The Policy Response

Underlying policy approaches:

- Public housing estates have benefited from a series of targeted programs that address physical and social problems

- Planning-based approaches – inclusionary zoning, developer levies and new land release policies have marginal impact on affordable housing need

- 'Whole of Government' approaches to coordinate government agencies

- Place Management – managers appointed to coordinate activity in local areas

- Partnerships – between levels of government and non-profit service providers

- Some spatial targeting of programs – but uncoordinated. Initiatives are primarily demand driven through grant schemes

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The policy response

- 36 major funding programs: highly fragmented, single project focus

- At least 10 Federal and State Departments involved - little coordination

- Programs primarily fund one-off social projects and improvements – lots of small agencies dependent on short-term grants or non-local charities

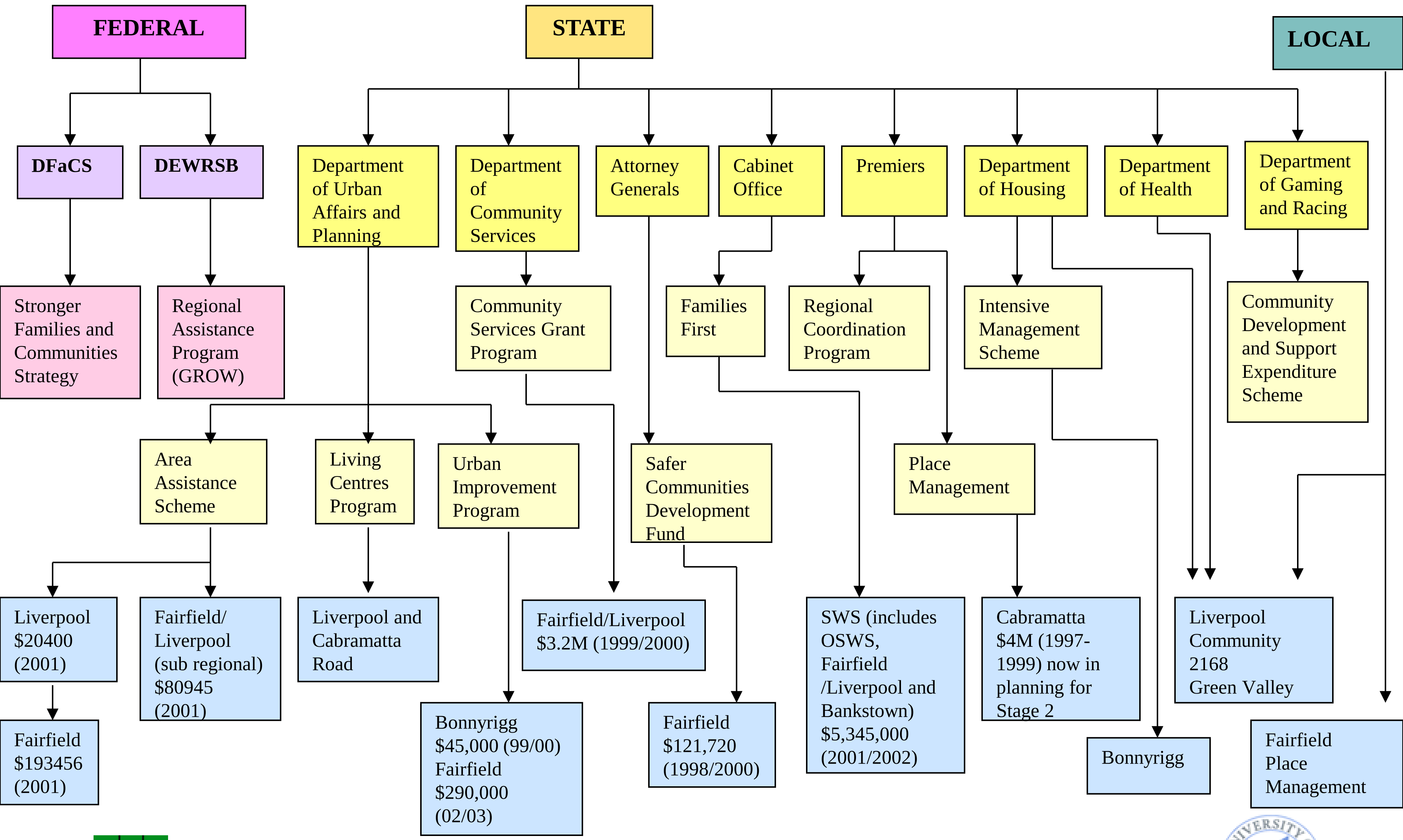
- No clear place targeting framework – implemented at a variety of spatial scales

- Outside the public housing areas, no programs to address poor housing, housing market disinvestment, affordability (other than limited rent assistance) or tackle land use issues. No LIHTC, Section 8 or Family Self-Sufficiency type schemes

- No private sector involvement or investment- no Fannie Mae, Ford Foundation, Neighbourhood Reinvestment Corp, etc. Government funds predominate

- No non-government housing investment/renewal agencies to deliver integrated housing and social renewal outcomes – no CDCs, etc.

Place Focused Initiatives in Fairfield/Liverpool LGAs



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Conclusions and Policy Implications

- Need for a holistic approach that includes mixed tenure affordable housing and physical renewal as well as social programs

- We need to develop 'local champions' – *Local Renewal Consortia* involving non-profit agencies – there for the long run

- Greater use of partnerships with private sector funding or involvement

- Greater use of spatially targeted resources: flexible *Local Renewal Funds* to match private/charitable funding

- We need a new Federal urban policy – there is none at present

- We need to look at US and European examples to see how this could be done effectively