Electronic Abstract Book and Special Session Information for

Australasian Housing Researchers Conference (AHRC) 2025:

Housing at a crossroad: wealth, inequality and housing futures

Date: 18 – 21 February 2025

Venue: The University of Sydney (Darlington Campus)

https://ahrc2025.sydney.edu.au/

To What Extent Can Passive Thermal Retrofits Address Climate Extremes in Non-HVAC Social Housing?

Mohammad Abousaeidi, Negin Nazarian, Gloria Pignatta

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Public housing and in general social housing systems in Australia face compounded challenges of energy poverty, declining housing quality, and exposure to climate-related risks such as heatwaves and extreme weather conditions. Vulnerable communities in non-HVAC high-rise social housing are particularly at risk due to poor thermal performance and limited access to cooling systems. This research investigates the effectiveness of passive thermal retrofits for extreme weather conditions and contributing to sustainable and climate resilient public housing.

Using dynamic thermal modelling through OpenStudio, this study evaluates retrofit strategies such as insulation upgrades, double glazing, reflective paint, and shading devices in two high-rise social housing buildings in Sydney. Performance is assessed under both current (TMY) and future (RCP4.5 2050) climate scenarios, focusing on their ability to manage indoor thermal conditions during extreme weather events. The study considers variations in retrofit effectiveness based on unit orientation, building level, and architectural configurations.

Key findings reveal the significant impact of future climate on indoor thermal balance, demonstrating increased challenges in maintaining comfort under warming projections. Retrofit techniques show varying effectiveness across current and future climates, with distinct performance differences between hot and cold seasons. The study highlights the role of building configuration and orientation in influencing thermal conditions, showing that unit placement and architectural configurations affect heat gain and loss. Additionally, the results underscore the importance of thermally resilient construction in reducing heat gain during summer and mitigating heat loss in winter.

Introducing Intergenerational Housing: A Case Study of Lasell Village

Sarah Aita, Andrea Blake, Mark Limb, Evonne Miller

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

As societies worldwide face rapid population ageing, there is a growing demand for innovative housing models for older adults. This study focuses on intergenerational housing as a potential model, examining Lasell Village—a senior housing community situated on the Lasell university campus in Newton, Massachusetts. Lasell village is currently home to approximately 225 residents and integrates lifelong learning and intergenerational engagement programming for their residents. The research investigates the market viability of such housing models by addressing two core questions:

(1) How can developers introduce and sustain intergenerational housing as a viable option through effective planning, financial structures, and supportive policies?

(2) What factors make intergenerational housing attractive to older adults, including financial feasibility, physical characteristics, and programming?

Using an embedded case study approach, we utilized a mixed-methods framework, incorporating stakeholder interviews and resident surveys to assess the supply and demand dimensions, respectively. Findings reveal that while intergenerational interactions are a valued feature, they are not the primary motivator for residents to choose to live in Lasell village. Instead, the educational programming offered at Lasell Village is the leading attraction, followed by the sense of community it fosters.

This research provides critical insights into the planning, design, and operational strategies required to make intergenerational housing feasible and desirable. Lessons from Lasell Village underscore the importance of tailoring housing models to the evolving preferences of older adults and offer actionable guidelines for replicating similar models in other contexts.

114 Billboards in the City of Wyndham: selling the contemporary Australian suburban housing dream

Ash Alam, Nicholas A Phelps

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

The study examines the critical, but frequently overlooked, role of real estate intermediation in responding to demographic diversity within the organised production of Melbourne's growth area suburbs. We examined 114 on-site billboards and 38 active residential development sites in the City of Wyndham, one of the most rapidly expanding suburban municipalities in Australia. Our findings underscore the ways real estate intermediation enchants an imagined suburban lifestyle through systematic marketing of community, amenity, and place. In-situ billboards serve as 'technologies of enchantment', promoting an Australian housing dream that is less closely associated with individual housing units, but obscures much of the poor social, environmental, and housing outcomes of suburbanization. Instead, suburbs are presented as a blank canvas for new migrant homebuyers to exercise agency in consuming culture and building community. The study thus highlights the crucial role real estate intermediation plays in the production of future ethnoburbs in the urban fringes. We also call for critical scrutiny of the specific use of visual resources that normalise suburban sprawl and substandard housing production by ingraining specific lifestyle imaginations in the Australian public psyche.

Strategic planning has been overtaken by the National Housing Target. How can we better plan for population, housing & infrastructure demand?

Kirstie Allen

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The five-year National Housing Target is aimed at delivering supply to respond to the national housing crisis. Jurisdictions like NSW are proposing to meet their share of the Target through (while prudent but nonetheless) incremental planning reforms such as the new TOD program. As a result, these reforms are shaping the future settlement of our cities and regions.

The housing crisis means that implementing the Target is a necessary priority, but it is overtaking orderly strategic planning. However, it should be no surprise that a national target is needed as strategic planning processes are not able to provide for the housing supply our cities need at the right time. This is because strategic plans are based on an annual average housing supply rate to meet an overall total and therefore not capable of sending signals to the planning system to meet demand fluctuations caused by, for example, population surges driven from strong migration programs. Also, strategic plans are updated every five years and the actual amount of supply needed in the system is updated at that point. To illustrate the issue, the Hunter Regional Plan 2041 finalised in December 2022 stated that the total Newcastle housing requirement over 20 years was 17,850 homes (an annual average of 893 homes) and yet the recent five-year local council housing target requires the delivery of 11,100 or 2,200 homes each year. This means that about 62% of the 20-year Regional Plan housing need is now to be delivered in five years.

Without embedded data-driven signals within strategic plans that send a signal to the planning and infrastructure planning systems to adapt to demand fluctuations (as say water strategies do), the planning system will continue to be vulnerable to 'catch-up' settlement planning to meet actual housing demand. Moreover, there is a risk of entrenching incremental settlement planning, and minimising the importance of integrated, sustainable and crucially adaptive long-term planning for the future of Australian cities, all underpinned with holistic community engagement.

This paper outlines directions for change to better plan for population growth through well-coordinated housing and infrastructure delivered at the right time and in the right place.

Creating neurodiverse-friendly housing: Scoping policy and knowledge gaps

Fatemeh Aminpour[1], Maximilienne Whitby[1], Phillippa Carnemolla[2]
[1]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia
[2] University of Technology, Sydney, Australia

The design of homes and neighbourhoods where neurodivergent individuals reside plays an important role in maximising their agency and independence. Thoughtful design can reduce the need for formal and informal support and make support provision safer and more efficient. Yet many housing providers, developers, and architects are not sufficiently aware of residential design factors and neighbourhood amenities that affect these residents' quality of life.

This presentation will scope and summarise current evidence on residential building design characteristics that cater to the specific needs and aspirations of the neurodivergent population. We will explore the needs of different demographics (e.g. single neurodivergent adults, families with neurodivergent children), types of housing (e.g. detached, apartments) and living arrangements (e.g. residential care, group living, individual living). The mediating role of community support and how a thoughtful neighbourhood design offers community access for this population will also be considered.

Multiple aspects of the building design will be discussed, including residential unit size, building material, house layout, availability of outdoor areas, safety features (e.g., in bathrooms, kitchens, and entrances), proximity to public facilities, and flexible design that can facilitate adaptation. The presentation will scope and review Apartment Design Guidelines to identify major gaps in accommodating neurodiverse-friendly residential characteristics.

“Decent homes and healthy housing for our mob”: Aboriginal social housing tenant perspectives from Dharawal Country at La Perouse, South-East Sydney

Jacek Anderst[1], Lola Ryan[2]

[1]The George Institute for Global Health, University of New South Wales Sydney, Australia

[2]South Eastern Sydney Local Health District, Sydney, Australia

Aboriginal social housing tenants in South-East Sydney have distinct housing and wellbeing priorities that fail to be meaningfully addressed by social housing providers and the broader housing policy landscape. In 2023, Dharawal Aboriginal community leader and health worker, Lola Ryan, and non-Aboriginal public health researcher, Jacek Anderst, yarned with 16 Aboriginal social housing tenants in La Perouse about housing, home and health. We found it is vital for Aboriginal people connected to La Perouse to remain in the area to stay connected to family, community, culture and Aboriginal services. Being connected to the community is vital for health and social, cultural and spiritual wellbeing. There is an urgent need for good quality housing conditions, timely housing maintenance and allocations to multi-bedroom properties for large families. There is a disjunct between the needs of Aboriginal tenants and the ability of social housing providers to meet these needs. The disjunct is structural and individual, borne of colonisation that has had and continues to have a profound impact on housing, health and wellbeing of Aboriginal people. We propose ideas for housing futures where Aboriginal people connected to La Perouse can truly thrive, according to the La Perouse community's measures of housing success and needs.

Housing transitions among young adults in Australia

Kadi Atalay, Juliana Silva Goncalves, Katrien Stevens (presenter), Stephen Whelan

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Housing plays a critical mediating role in the transition into adulthood and the housing experience of young adults is likely to have immediate implications for their health and welfare, and potential lasting impacts over the life-cycle. We analyse the housing experiences of young adults as they transition from secondary education, characterising the degree of housing independence experienced that reflects where young adults reside and the responsibility taken for housing related expenses. We find that housing experiences and the support offered by parents is related to gender, geographic location and education choices. The analysis identifies differences across gender and evidence of a socio-economic gradient in the housing experiences and support offered to younger Australians.

House prices and divorce: evidence from Australia

Kadi Atalay, Luke Hartigan, Ruoran Wang and Stephen Whelan (presenter)

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Changes in house prices are increasingly associated with life events or choices such as fertility, consumption and retirement. In this paper we examine the relationship between marriage (or partnership) separation and the price of housing. Higher house prices have an ambiguous impact on marital stability given their impact on wealth and the public good nature of housing services. Using the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey we analyse how higher house prices impact on marital (or partnership) stability. We find evidence that higher house prices are associated with a lower likelihood of divorce amongst owners.

Predicting the impact of large scale urban upzoning on housing supply

Stephanie Barker, Peter Phibbs

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Large scale upzoning in cities is seen as a major new tool for increasing housing supply in cities (Productivity Commission, 2022). A common case study cited in these discussions is the experience of Auckland New Zealand, highlighting the additional housing supply that was activated in Auckland by a large scale upzoning (Greenaway-McGrevy and Phillips). However, a very comprehensive international review of urban upzoning (Freemark, 2023) has shown mixed results, with some upzonings having no apparent impact on housing supply. This paper explores why there are such varied outcomes from upzonings and discusses the pros and cons of various approaches to upzoning that are available to urban planning systems. In particular, it compares the potential results from what might be called the large scale upzoning of residential areas such as those recently unveiled in Sydney (NSW Department of Planning) and the more traditional planning approach of upzoning in selected precincts, often featuring the conversion of non-residential land to residential uses.

The changing geography of homelessness in Australia and its relationship to affordable housing supply and other factors

Deb Batterham[1], Margaret/Maggie Reynolds[1], Melek Cigdem Bayram[2] Sharon Parkinson[1]

[1]Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

[2]The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

This paper presents findings from an AHURI funded research project investigating the changing geography of homelessness in Australia and its structural drivers. The research draws on a rich panel dataset spanning 20 years (2001-2021) including publicly available and customized data from both the ABS Census and Specialist Homelessness Service (SHS) Collection. Descriptive analysis, GIS choropleth mapping and spatial modelling were used to explore the changing spatial distribution of homelessness and its relationship to SHS capacity and supplies of affordable rental housing.

This paper will show how homelessness is higher in areas with a poorer supply of low-cost rentals relative to local demand from households with very low incomes. It will present spatial modelling results that quantify the impact of increasing supplies of affordable private rental, and separately social housing, in reducing rates of homelessness in greater capital city and balance of state areas.

Descriptive analysis will show how conditions in local private rental markets influence the effectiveness of SHSs. For example, how a higher percentage of SHS clients were returning for assistance in areas with less affordable rental housing relative to demand from very low-income households. Using data from the SHSC we present estimate that around 180,000 dwellings are needed nationally to provide housing to clients who accessed an SHS in 2021–22. This estimate is for one financial year only with a similar volume needed year on year.

Key findings on the mobility of people experiencing homelessness, the demographic profiles of areas and the changing geography of homelessness itself will also be presented.

We conclude by locating these findings within an emerging body of work on the geography of homelessness, risk and housing markets in Australia, suggesting a range of policy options for addressing and preventing homelessness in Australia as well as data improvements to existing collections.

Housing in disaster affected areas: from crisis to long term resilience

Richard Benedict, Nicole Gurran

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Climate-related disasters present growing threats to Australian households and communities already burdened by housing crisis. These risks are particularly acute in regional areas where long neglected housing pressures have escalated following the loss of thousands of homes to fire and flood. This paper reports on research commissioned by the NSW Reconstruction Authority in the wake of the February 2022 flood events which resulted in 9 deaths and damaged over 14,000 homes. Recognising longstanding disjunctions between government responsibilities for emergency management, housing policy and assistance – echoed by entrenched professional and disciplinary divisions – the study sought to situate housing considerations in disaster planning, response, and recovery processes. The paper first offers a conceptual schema for understanding housing in the context of disaster risk and resilience, before considering the Northern Rivers case. Building on the international research evidence and extensive local stakeholder consultation in the Northern Rivers, the paper outlines a policy and practice framework for integrating housing considerations across the disaster planning and management cycle. The research was conducted through the Northern Rivers Living Lab which itself provides an exemplar for integrated and community led models for disaster recovery and long term climate resilience.

Adaptive Governance in Community Housing: Navigating Wellbeing, Funding Challenges, and Policy Shifts in Aotearoa/New Zealand

Sarah Bierre, Libby Grant, Philippa Howden-Chapman

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

This paper presents the results of a study of public housing governance and wellbeing, embedded within a large multi-strand programme - Public Housing and Urban Regeneration (PHUR). We examine the political and financial influences on community housing providers (CHPs) in Aotearoa/NZ (AoNZ) and their navigation of complex and dynamic external influences in attempting to govern with care. We situate our work within scholarship that conceptualises these housing providers as hybrid organisations, traversing political, state, and private sector interests, along with their social mission. We find that CHPs must adopt an adaptive governance, navigating several barriers including funding limitations, regulatory complexities, with particular challenges for Māori-led organisations. In response to challenges, CHPs are exploring new partnerships and funding models, including collaborations with private investors and significant borrowing. The sector's heavy dependence on government funding is evident, with policy changes significantly impacting development projects, and at times, pitting community housing against traditional state-owned public housing. We highlight challenges in demonstrating the broader value of housing developments and navigating government policy shifts. We argue there is a need for better resource allocation and measurement of social impacts and cross-party consensus to ensure policy stability. While CHPs adapt their governance to deliver housing with care, there is a need for systemic reforms to address funding, regulatory, and equity issues while emphasizing the social value of housing initiatives.

Navigating the complexities of strata management in Australia: A call for Harmonisation

Andrea Blake

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Strata developments are pivotal to the densification of cities, offering a viable strategy to address housing affordability. However, the management of strata schemes across Australia is hindered by significant variations in legislation and practices, creating challenges for owners, occupiers and managers. This paper examines the key differences in body corporate management across three key jurisdictions, New South Wales, Victora and Queensland, and identifies the most commonly disputed aspects of governance. By highlighting these issues, the paper highlights the complexities of these variations and ultimately advocates for the harmonisation of strata legislation across Australia.

Navigating cultural, financial, and discriminatory barriers: The housing struggles of young African refugees in Australia

Mavis Boamah

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

The journey of young African refugees in Australia is a testament to resilience, adaptation, and the pursuit of a better life. Stable housing has been identified as a key determinant of successful integration, well-being, and educational success. Despite housing availability and affordability being central themes in national debates, current policies overlook the specific needs of refugee youth. This research delves into the complex housing challenges faced by young African refugees in Australia, based on 20 in-depth life narratives. The personal accounts of young people from refugee backgrounds reveal housing affordability, availability, and proximity directly impact their educational trajectories, highlighting the critical, yet underexplored role of housing in shaping the futures of refugee youth.

Moreover, the findings demonstrate how these young refugees face compounded challenges due to cultural expectations, financial pressures, and discriminatory barriers, further increasing their vulnerability in the housing market. These layered difficulties emphasise the urgent need for housing policies that are inclusive of the unique needs of young refugees. By bridging the gap between broad housing discourse and the nuanced perspective of those with lived experience, this study offers valuable insights to inform more targeted and effective policy interventions to mitigate housing-related challenges and enhance the educational and overall integration outcomes for young African refugees in Australia.

Residential Relocation: A Forward-Looking Behavioural Model with Insights from Sydney

Maryam Bostanara, Amarin Siripanich, Taha Hossein Rashidi

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Residential relocation plays a crucial role in shaping land-use planning and is significant for policymakers aiming to develop sustainable and liveable communities. This research explores the complex questions of when, why, and where households decide to relocate, using an advanced methodological approach. Conventional models in this field often fail to capture the dynamic nature of household decision-making across the life course. This study introduces an enhanced framework for modelling residential relocation using dynamic discrete choice modelling (DDCM), which combines the forward-looking capacity of DDCM with the strengths of classical models. This allows for the integration of past, present, and future factors in the decision-making process. The DDCM framework is a valuable tool for understanding household relocation trends over time, particularly as economic, household, and urban characteristics evolve. Furthermore, this framework addresses the often-overlooked interplay between residential and job relocations, providing a more comprehensive view of real-world decision-making dynamics.

The effectiveness of the framework is demonstrated using data from the Household, Income, and Labour Dynamics in Australia (HILDA) survey in Sydney, drawing on 21 waves of residential and workplace relocation data from 2001 to 2021 for residents of the Sydney metropolitan region. The findings suggest that Sydney households place substantial weight on future conditions when making residential choices, confirming that future expectations significantly influence current relocation decisions. Households appear to consider at least a few years into the future when deciding on relocation. Additionally, while many people remain in place after a home relocation, they often re-enter the housing market after a few years. This study critically examines the role of housing affordability in shaping relocation choices, along with the factors that either deter or encourage households to stay or relocate, offering actionable insights that enhance understanding of residential decision-making. These insights hold implications for land-use and transportation policy.

Olympic Host Cities and Homelessness: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly

Lyndall Bryant

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

The Brisbane 2032 Olympics are eight years away and the region is already in the grips of a housing crisis. With all attention on stadium development, South East Queensland is at risk of sleep-walking off a housing affordability and homelessness cliff. Paris provides a sorry example of where policy makers could instead be focused. In the lead up to the Paris Olympics, French authorities were accused of "social cleansing", relocating homeless people. Such displacement may be evidence of ineffective housing policies leading up to the Games, with detrimental impacts on the most disadvantaged. Prior host cities provide valuable evidence of the impacts on housing/homelessness and initiatives to overcome potential social and economic impacts. This research gathers data from prior host cities, with a focus on Paris as the most recent host city, as a first step to inform Queensland policy makers in the lead up to Brisbane 2032.

Zoned for Privilege: The Spatial Injustice of Elite School Zones in Aotearoa New Zealand

Timothy B. Buckenham, Tracey Skelton

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

This article explores the relationship between sought-after school zones, spatial in/justice, and the housing market in Aotearoa New Zealand, challenging the country's enduring self-image as an egalitarian society. It reveals how sought-after state schools, celebrated for their academic excellence and social prestige, create socio-spatial divides that entrench privilege within specific urban spaces. These schools influence housing markets by driving residential sorting, leading to property values and social capital concentrating within their enrolment zones, thereby transforming access to sought-after education into an asset accessible primarily to affluent families. This dynamic perpetuates cycles of advantage and exclusion, complicating the ideals of equality and fair opportunity.

Using a robust mixed-methods approach—including GIS mapping and Boundary Discontinuity Design to visualise and analyse property value patterns, policy analysis to dissect zoning and enrolment regulations, community surveys to capture public attitudes, and qualitative interviews to illuminate lived experiences—this study uncovers a feedback loop in which zoning policies, housing demand, and school reputations reinforce socio-economic stratification. The findings demonstrate how these interconnected systems of privilege amplify socio-economic inequalities, turning the pursuit of sought-after education into a driver of urban inequality and social immobility.

By critically examining these dynamics through the lens of spatial justice, this article raises urgent questions about the fair distribution of resources and the ethical responsibilities of urban planning and educational policy in perpetuating or addressing inequality. It calls for a rethinking of zoning and housing strategies to dismantle entrenched inequities and advocates for policy reforms that prioritise the construction of a 'just city' in an era of rising socio-economic disparity. This research challenges New Zealand to confront its egalitarian myth and to consider actionable steps toward a fairer, more inclusive urban landscape.

Housing challenges of single parent families in Australia

Caitlin Buckle, Alessia Cibin

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Single parent families with dependent children are particularly vulnerable in the private housing sector, facing significant challenges in securing adequate and stable housing. In a highly privatised housing system such as Australia, the need for additional space to accommodate children, coupled with the increasing requirement for dual incomes to remain competitive, places single parents at a distinct disadvantage. Despite this, single parent families have received relatively little recent academic attention in housing and urban studies. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the housing circumstances of single-parent families with dependent children in Australia. Using Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2006, 2011, 2016 and 2021 census data, we analyse tenure, dwelling type, household suitability, and housing costs of single parent families to understand their historical and current housing circumstances. We also map areas where single-parent families live, investigating how housing affordability and availability might influence residential choices. Additionally, to understand the support and barriers single parent families face in accessing stable and suitable housing, we conducted a policy analysis of local, state and federal government housing and welfare policies. Our findings reveal that single-parent families face unique challenges within the private housing sector compared to other Australian households. The study calls for greater research and policy attention on the housing needs of single parent families and the enduring inequities in access to stable housing across Australia.

The Challenge of Australian Rent Regulation; balancing tenant and landlord needs

Terry Burke, Liss Ralston

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

This paper briefly reviews the international literature on rent regulation to summarise knowledge on market and tenant outcomes and then provides a case study of Victoria using available secondary data to assess how we might understand the 'rent crisis' and the need for any rent regulation. The argument is that there are two rent crisis, a point in time crisis and a long term structural crisis with rent regulation having a potential role in both but only a compliment to other policy. The paper then makes an assessment of the attributes of Australian landlords and market circumstances with a view to determining the capacity for landlords to adapt to rent regulation in the form of a CPI cap without significant negative market impacts.

Summertime indoor overheating and energy poverty in Aotearoa New Zealand public housing

Zhiting Chen[1], Kimberley Clare O'Sullivan[1], Nevil Pierse[1], Emma Ericson[2], Kassy Stephenson[2]

[1]University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

[2]Te Toi Mahana Community Housing, New Zealand

Indoor overheating and rising demand for active cooling are growing concerns in Aotearoa New Zealand as summer temperatures increase due to climate change. Energy poverty arises when a household lacks sufficient energy to meet basic needs, leading to adverse effects on residents' health and wellbeing. The rising need for active cooling exacerbates this condition, particularly affecting vulnerable groups. Public housing tenants, who often lack control over their living environments, are one such group at heightened risk.

This presentation reports on a mixed-methods case study investigating the experiences of public housing tenants facing indoor overheating. Temperature monitoring was conducted in seven Wellington public housing units from December 2023 to February 2024, and overheating risk was assessed using the Chartered Institution of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE) methods. Participants were interviewed before and after summer, and qualitative data were integrated with quantitative findings to assess the impacts of overheating and tenant vulnerabilities. Results indicate significant overheating, particularly during sleeping hours, with the worst case exceeding the threshold for over 36% of sleeping hours. Six of the seven participants reported sleep difficulties due to overheating.

Qualitative results highlight substantial adverse effects on tenants' health and wellbeing, exacerbated by socio-economic constraints that heighten their vulnerability. Passive cooling strategies and behavioural thermoregulation were found to be impractical and insufficient in achieving thermal comfort. While portable air conditioners effectively maintained indoor temperatures within acceptable thresholds, their use was constrained by cost and local wind conditions. The study underscores the urgent need for energy-efficient public housing that provides year-round healthy thermal conditions for vulnerable populations.

Living on the list: The experiential, emotional and temporal dimensions of waiting for social housing

Lynda Cheshire, Joelle Moore

The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Around 170,000 households are currently registered for social housing across Australia and waiting for a dwelling to become available. With social housing comprising a mere 4.1% of all housing stock, the reality for many of those households is an indeterminate wait of many years despite their high and very-high needs status. The drivers of this situation are well-known, as are the policy responses that have been adopted to prioritise, manage, and lessen the growing number of households on the social housing register. What is less known, however, is how waiting for social housing is experienced, endured and given meaning by those who wait. Based on an ARC Linkage project undertaken in NSW, Queensland and Tasmania, this presentation considers the experiential, emotional and temporal dimensions of waiting for social housing from the perspective of eligible social housing applicants. It draws on semi-structured interviews with 75 people on the social housing register to examine what it means to wait; how participants manage the wait; the emotions that waiting evokes; and conceptions of the social housing register as a queue with no logic where places are ascribed, positions shift, and time makes no sense. Our research contributes to existing literature on the lived experience of waiting (for healthcare, housing, or while in immigration detention) by revealing the anxiety, frustration and powerlessness experienced by those who wait. But it also contributes to more critical analyses of waiting as an effect of (state) power (c.f. Bourdieu) in the way hope is not merely delayed through the indeterminacy of the wait, but also destroyed through its futility.

Designing private residential gardens that are climate resilient and temperature safe

Paul Cheung, Stephen Livesley

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Private residential gardens are important for people who live in independent houses because they provide a convenient and safe place for them to engage in physical, social and recreational activities. In Australia, the areas of private residential gardens have decreased and the use of artificial surfaces such as artificial turf and timber have increased. These changes may increase the human heat stress in the gardens in summer, reducing the quality and potential use of the gardens. Artificial surfaces may also present a risk of human skin burns, particularly for children and the elderly. This study aimed to i) identify the design factors that influence human heat stress in private back and front gardens in summer, and ii) measure the risk of human skin burns for different surfaces based on their surface temperatures in private back gardens in summer. We recruited nine private homeowners in Melbourne, Australia, to participate in this study. The meteorological conditions of their back and front gardens were measured continuously in 2024's summer.

The results showed that the daytime (08:00–16:59) mean air temperature of the back gardens were 0.8 °C lower for every 100 m2 increase in area. The back gardens of East-West facing houses were 1.2 °C lower than North-South facing houses. The back gardens with irrigated vegetation were 0.6 °C lower than those without. The daytime mean air temperatures of front gardens were not significantly associated with the presence of nearby green spaces, orientation of the house, presence of irrigated vegetation, and sky view factor. On a warm day (maximum air temperature > 33°C), the surface temperatures of artificial turf (52.8 °C), mulch (48.9 °C), and timber (47.8 °C) were closed to or exceeded the skin burn threshold of 48.0 °C, as set by the International Organisation for Standardisation. The surface temperature of irrigated turf (41.0 °C) did not exceed the threshold. The findings suggest that the climate resilience and thermal quality of private residential back gardens can be increased by increasing their area, building East-West facing houses, and having irrigated vegetation.

Expanding the evidence on children's housing in Australia

Amy Clair, Emma Baker, Lynne Giles

The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

Housing is an important influence on health and well-being but most existing, particularly quantitative, data focuses on adults, leaving the association with children's well-being underexplored. While in many ways the associations between housing and well-being will be similar for adults and children, there are important considerations that call for a focus on children's housing, for example associations with education services and the impact of housing on children via parenting behaviours. Existing evidence indicates that households with children in Australia are disproportionately likely to live in poorer quality homes, and to be affected by the housing market changes that have seen traditional housing trajectories become less common.

This presentation will report the results of two projects designed to improve our knowledge and evidence base on children's housing and its links with their health. The first is a survey of 500 households with children in South Australia, including details of housing conditions, affordability, security, and perceived impacts on children's health. This study uncovers significant challenges faced by households with children in the rental market, finding that nearly a quarter of renting households reported that their most recent move was due to the landlord ending the tenancy, suggesting significant insecurity, and multiple renting households reported applying for around 50 homes before finally finding somewhere new to live. The second is a smaller survey of households with children in metropolitan Adelaide. This survey included information on housing conditions, affordability, and tenure, alongside information on indoor temperatures from temperature sensos placed in the home for 6 months. The results of these surveys, new insights, and plans for future work will be discussed.

Understanding evictions in the 'asset economy'

Andrew Clarke[1], Joelle Moore[2]

[1]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

[2]The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

In 'asset economies' like Australia, the UK and USA, the combined process of asset price inflation and wage stagnation have made residential property ownership a key driver of class inequality. This paper explores how these new class dynamics are reshaping the relationship between tenants and landlords. It does so through the lens of evictions, drawing on qualitative interviews with private rental tenants who have recently been evicted in New South Wales and Queensland. We show that eviction continues to be used as a mechanism through which property owners discipline non-owning tenants (e.g. to accept rental increases, poor property maintenance, etc) – a process well-documented in the literature. However, we also find a range of non-disciplinary uses related to landlords' need to be able to dispose of sitting tenants to realise the speculative capital gains offered by the asset economy. Here, eviction serves a different form of class power that is less concerned with managing tenant behaviour and more with ensuring their disposability. This has the effect of intensifying the residential insecurity and uncertainty experienced by tenants, thus raising questions about the adequacy of current protections against evictions, including recent bans on 'no grounds' evictions.

Rent Tech, Emerging Regulation and the Right to Adequate Housing

Tegan Cohen

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Digital platforms, AI and automated systems increasingly mediate tenant-private landlord relationships. These tools and platforms are generally marketed with the promise of efficiency, convenience and neutrality. However, various reports of tenant surveillance, price inflation and discriminatory profiling portend a potentially bleak future for renters under 'automated landlordism' (Fields, 2022).

In recent years, calls to orient the regulation of AI and automation around human rights standards have grown (Compton & Hohmann, 2023; Hohmann, 2020). At the same time, governments in Australia and abroad are considering new models of regulation to target harms arising from the design and use of AI and digital platforms. Models such as 'risk-based' regulation of AI and 'duties of care' for online platforms have gained traction in Australian policy and law reform discussions (DISR, 2024; Rowland, 2024). Generally speaking, these models place an onus on technology companies to proactively identify and mitigate the harms imposed by their systems and services.

This paper argues that legal definitions of harm and responsibilities for rental technology providers to prevent harm under such frameworks should be guided by the right to adequate housing. Further, this paper focuses on the practical question of how. Three possibilities are discussed, namely, the right to adequate housing as a guide to interpreting: (a) fairness and reasonableness standards under data privacy law; (b) the content and scope of a duty of care; and (c) objectives and benchmarks for ethical and beneficial design. By working through practical examples, this paper aims to build understanding of the ways in which the right to adequate housing can give normative substance to emerging regulatory models.

Understanding the role of migration, culture and transnational ties in family financial assistance with home ownership

Julia Cook

Newcastle University, Newcastle, Australia

Although family financial assistance with home ownership has attracted significant scholarly attention in recent years the role of migration and transnational ties in this practice remains significantly under-addressed. I address this topic by drawing on interviews conducted with donors and recipients of family financial assistance with home ownership in Australia who had personal and recent family experiences of migration. Specifically, I consider how transnational families engage in resource pooling for collective advantage in relation to the Australian property market. Drawing on the work of Ma et al. (2022) I consider whether the participants are engaging in what the authors have termed 'family wealth strategies'. I ultimately argue that popular conversations and academic studies in the multicultural societies in which debates about the asset economy are most active (the US, the UK, Australia) have been dominated by Anglo-centric experiences, and have not considered how these arrangements may extend beyond national borders. In so doing I highlight this topic as an important area for further research for the growing number of scholars working on families and wealth.

The many paths to a sense of home: insights from community land trusts and housing cooperatives in Australia

Louise Crabtree-Hayes[1], Sidsel Grimstad[2], Neil Perry[1], Emma Power[1], Wendy Stone[3], Jeremy Niass[4], Piret Veeroja[3]

[1]Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

[2]Griffith University, South East Queensland, Australia

[3]Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

[4]University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia

Australia's housing policy and market landscape since the mid 20th century has perceived and prioritised individualised ownership as the primary tenure for delivering the sense of home that is created through housing stability, dignity, and agency. This decades-long feedback loop between policy and market behaviours has created a nexus comprising a speculative ownership market and myriad feeder industries, which seems impossible to wrestle back towards the core objectives of providing secure, appropriate, and affordable housing to all Australians. Despite and amid this Australian context, diverse tenure forms exist, thrive, and are growing. These can deliver the core attributes of stability, dignity, and agency that comprise home, without requiring resident capital investment or return.

This paper presents findings from two recent research projects on diverse tenures in Australia, namely community land trusts and rental housing cooperatives. The community land trust project focused on the market appeal of a hypothetical permanently affordable ownership model based on extant community land trusts models. In the proposed model, residents would share any equity gain or loss with a partner non-profit organisation and so, while entitled to a limited share of value change, would not be able to speculate on capital gains. The cooperative project worked with cooperative tenant-members and aligned community housing providers across four Australian states to articulate and demonstrate the benefits of living and volunteering in an affordable rental housing cooperative. Both projects revealed the myriad ways in which people seek and are able to make home, without this requiring speculative ownership. This is vital data that can inform and justify appropriate policy support for diverse tenures in Australia and shape further research into how a sense of home can be created, experienced, and enabled through a diversified housing system.

Exploring opportunities to improve the delivery of, and access to, Specialist Disability Accommodation

Adam Crowe[1], Katie Ellis[1], Amity James[1], Ilan Wiesel[2], Gwyneth Peaty[1], Eleanor Malbon[3], Raelene West[2]

[1]Curtin University, Perth, Australia

[2]The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

[3]Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Access to appropriate, affordable, and secure housing is essential for dignity, well-being, and quality of life. Yet, Australians with disabilities face significant barriers in securing such housing. The introduction of the Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA) program under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) represents a paradigm shift in the housing landscape for people with disability. However, the implementation of this program has been fraught with challenges that hinder its potential, compromising the right of people with disability to access housing that is not only affordable and suitable but also empowers them with choice and control over their living arrangements—including where, and with whom they live.

SDA homes that accommodate six or more people, usually based on older models of congregate support for people with intellectual disabilities, are still funded by the NDIS. However, the NDIS intends to gradually cease funding this ‘legacy’ stock housing, which does not meet contemporary standards of housing and support for people with disabilities. In these circumstances, social housing providers owning or managing legacy stock are under pressure to 'upgrade' these homes to meet contemporary standards, yet lack the financial resources to action these necessary changes.

This session draws on insights from recently published research by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI) and preliminary findings from a study commissioned by the Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA). It will unpack the intricate interplay between the SDA program and the broader social housing sector. From the challenges in delivering SDA and the push to upgrade substandard legacy housing, to the lived experiences of NDIS participants in navigating these systems, this presentation will spotlight the critical policy and industry directions required to strengthen the sector and improve access to inclusive, accessible, and well-located housing for people with disability.

Healthy & HomED: Optimising access to health and social supports for people experiencing homelessness

Jane Currie[1], Jo River[1]; Kevin Street[2]; Mike Clark[2]

[1]Faculty of Health, School of Nursing, University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[2]Lived Experience Co-researcher

Healthy & HomED is a co-designed research program that will transform mainstream emergency department (ED) care for people experiencing homelessness, who comprise one in ten people accessing ED. Homelessness is associated with multiple and grave physical and mental health outcomes. For many reasons, including stigma and competing priorities, people often access health services late or not at all - leading to chronic health conditions and premature death (~30 years) from treatable conditions. The first or only contact with services for people experiencing homelessness is often via the ED. Yet, ED clinicians do not routinely screen for homelessness, and when they do, are unsure how to respond. This is linked to 43% of people experiencing homelessness having unmet health and social care, and re-attending at least once to the same ED within 28-days, costing $296 million annually. The most effective way to improve the health of people experiencing homelessness is to prioritise housing using a 'Housing First' approach. However, to support housing access, and optimise health outcomes, it is critical that ED clinicians have the capability to identify and respond to people experiencing homelessness.

This co-designed project, undertaken in partnership with people with lived experience, ED clinicians and homeless health experts, includes a model of care named the 'Healthy & HomED' that includes 1) screening for homelessness, 2) identification of unmet needs using the Access to Care Tool, 3) timely mobilisation of existing resources linking people to health and social supports, including housing services. The Healthy & HomED is underpinned by two literature reviews, a Delphi study, pilot psychometrics, a feasibility RCT, and a cohort study. In this presentation we will outline the development of the Healthy & HomED, findings to date, and present the forthcoming multi-site step wedge RCT, to test impact on ED re-presentation rates among people experiencing homelessness.

Supporting collaborative housing through policy interventions - learning from global experience

Matt Daly

University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Improving housing supply, diversity and affordability is a key policy priority for the Greater Sydney region. Lack of diversity in the housing stock has been identified as an issue across major Australian cities. There are gaps in the dwelling types being provided, as well as the tenure and affordability options.

Collaborative housing is an 'umbrella' term for various alternative approaches that give residents greater choice and agency in the production of their housing – particularly through deliberative development and cooperative housing models. There are aspects of collaborative housing models that support the growth of greater diversity in the low-mid-rise medium density housing stock, and open up possibilities in the 'missing middle' of housing affordability and tenure, between social and market housing (both rental and ownership).

Changing the relationship between demand and production sides of housing has the potential to generate different outcomes in form, location, and tenure models, when the needs of residents are prioritised. There are numerous isolated examples of collaborative housing developments that deliver medium-density housing that more directly to the needs of residents, often in ways that challenge the predominant housing types.

This work looked beyond the individual project level, to review the policy mechanisms used internationally to support the introduction, growth or endurance of collaborative housing sectors. It responds to policies encouraging medium density and affordable housing around transport hubs. This provides important resource and guidance for the potential interventions that can be explored within NSW and Australia.

Examining the data ecosystem around planning for housing in New South Wales

Claire Daniel

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The data ecosystem surrounding planning four housing in New South Wales (NSW) has undergone significant transformation over the past decade, with technological advances making it ever easier to generate, store, analyse and share land and housing data on a city-wide, and even nation-wide scale. This paper examines this ecosystem and whether it is fit for purpose when it comes to planning for housing. The paper draws on a retrospective study on the use of data analytics in the formulation and implementation of the Greater Sydney Regional and District Plans. Combining document analysis, citation network analysis, this research mapped key components of the data sources and organisations involved. Insights from 20 key informant interviews shine light on how analytics was used to inform planning decisions, and emerging trends in digitalisation of the NSW planning system.

Findings show a complex network of political actors involved in producing and utilising data to produce evidence that informed the planning process, including state government agencies, academic institutions, lobby groups, consultants and other private sector intermediaries. The analysis also highlights disparities within this system, with extensive digitalisation and platformisation of the real estate sector, contrasting with relatively underdeveloped data infrastructures that meet the needs of planning. The results emphasise the need to move beyond surface-level discussions about open data availability and focus on how the underlying data ecosystem could be shaped to better support planning for fair and effective housing outcomes.

Identifying and measuring healthy housing conditions for mental health

Lyrian Daniel[1], Marlee Bower[2], Jacky Dawkins[2]

[1]University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

[2]The University of Sydney, Australia

Housing conditions are a key social determinant of people's health and wellbeing. The quality and condition of housing can play a pivotal role in magnifying or mitigating the additional health effects of climate change weather events for residents. However, there exists a data gap for policymakers and researchers around the state of housing conditions in Australia and their role in climate resilience and adaptation. It is important to have accurate data to assess the state of our housing and how this can be utilised to protect mental health and wellbeing.

The Australian Housing Conditions Dataset (AHCD) is the largest national survey on housing conditions, collecting survey data from all states and territories across private rental, social rental and homeowner households. The dataset captures information on household demographic characteristics, housing quality and conditions, and responding person health and wellbeing.

We will present an analysis of the 2020, 2022 and 2024 datasets in the AHCD to highlight how the housing-mental health relationship has changed during that period and how this relates to climate change-related exposures. We will also reflect on recent research about housing-mental health in Australia, and priorities for continued efforts.

This presentation will provide preliminary insights into the importance of national housing inequity in the Australian context and how housing conditions will impact mental ill-health in the face of climate change. This will provide a basis for discussion of the development of practical solutions and continued research around the breadth of housing standard challenges faced in the Australian housing stock and the resultant impacts on mental health in the context of climate change.

A concise history of public housing estate renewal in Victoria

Liam Davies

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Public housing estates in desirable locations have been turned to for redevelopment in recent decades, across Australia. In Victoria this has largely occurred in inner and middle suburbs, with post-war housing stock being demolished and replaced by higher density housing estates. This paper examines the history of these renewals, tracking the evolution of redevelopment programmes, from state led redevelopment in the 1980s, to partnerships from the 1990s. The nature of these partnerships has evolved, with ever increasing complexity and size. Redevelopments have resulted in very different outcomes, from all dwellings remaining in state ownership to only one in five remaining in state ownership. This variability carries with it an opportunity cost which is important to understand, as land can only be dispose of once. In the face of the Victorian state governments announcement to redevelop all 44 high-rise public housing towers in Victoria, it is important to look back at how previous developments have been undertaken, and the benefits and disbenefits which have resulted.

Locating housing within existing empirical models of climate change and mental health: findings from a global systematic scoping review

Jacky Dawkins, Marlee Bower

The Matilda Centre for Research in Mental Health and Substance Use,

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Background: Built environment, such as housing and neighbourhood design/characteristics, can affect mental health vulnerabilities and outcomes in the face of growing climate-related hazards. The nexus of climate change, built environment, and mental health is an important pathway to understand this growing area of climate vulnerability – however, there is limited research exploring this pathway. Further research is required to appropriately inform housing policy development and adaptation responses relating to climate change and mental health challenges.

Methods: We will present the initial housing-related findings from the scoping review from a secondary analysis of published data exploring frameworks that address the pathway between climate change, built environment, and mental health. The systematic scoping review of peer-reviewed and grey literature will be conducted in accordance with Arksey and O'Malley's methodological framework and Joanna Briggs Institute recommendations. Articles included in the scoping review will present a theory, model or framework incorporating relevant built environment pathways through which climate change may impact mental health and wellbeing.

Results: This scoping review will identify and synthesise existing frameworks that describe the relationship between housing physical characteristics, policy and planning mechanisms and climate change and the resulting impacts on mental health and wellbeing.

Conclusion: This review aims to uncover existing descriptive pathways relating to climate change, housing, and mental health outcomes. We anticipate that this will provide evidence-based frameworks and models that can facilitate climate-adaptive and resilient housing and neighbourhood design to positively impact mental health service planning and mental health outcomes. This review will support local urban planning policy development, housing decision makers, and future research to address the growing mental health impacts on individuals and communities in urban areas in the face of climate change.

Implementing climate resilience policy and housing as a human right at the local government level in Merri-bek

Karien Dekker, Sarah Robertson

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

This paper discusses the opportunities and challenges of using a human rights lens in the design, implementation and evaluation of local government climate resilience policy.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) states that all people should have equal and non-discriminatory access to adequate housing. Housing is adequate if it guarantees physical safety or provides adequate space, as well as protection against the cold, damp, heat, rain, wind, other threats to health, and structural hazards. Yet, it is estimated that 75% of Australian homes perform thermally poorly, too hot in summer, too cold in winter and ill-prepared for the increasing effects of a changing climate.

To analyse how a climate resilience policy in an urban environment fits within wider theories of the human right to adequate housing, we draw on empirical data from research undertaken in Merri-bek, a city council located in Melbourne, Australia, where climate resilience has been prioritised.

The research used a mixed-methods approach combining conversations, focus groups and a co-designed workshop with local government officers working in various departments in the city, local community service providers, and community representatives.

We conducted a discourse and policy analysis to explore the role and prioritisation of climate resilience and the right to adequate housing in policy design and implementation processes. We find that multiple and intersecting considerations, including consideration of ‘at risk’ communities, shapes how the right to housing is positioned in policy making and outcomes. We will conclude the paper with recommendations for people working in local governments on climate resilience policy.

The changing geography of home ownership in Australia 2016-2021

Jago Dodson, Tiebei (Terry) Li (co-presenters)

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

The status of home ownership as an aspirational tenure within Australian society has faced increasing scrutiny under recent economic and social changes. Public debates have raised fears of a decline in home ownership and the prospect that younger generations will be 'locked out' of the opportunity to accrue housing assets. Major policy changes are being enacted at national and state levels to respond to home ownership concerns, including new schemes to support access to finance and planning deregulation aimed at increasing the supply of affordable dwellings. Yet census data record a national-level gain in home ownership in Australia from 65.5 per cent of dwellings in 2016 to 66.0 per cent in 2021, reflecting similar stability in home ownership recorded in other data, such as the ABS Housing Occupancy and Costs Survey 2019. The contradiction of stable home ownership rate but widespread public belief in a decline implies a need for further investigation. In this paper we speculate that public concern about home ownership rates arises out of declines within specific but highly visible sub-segments of the housing system, but that these sub-segmental declines are quantitatively not representative of overall home ownership patterns and rates. However this assumption requires empirical testing. We investigate this supposition by analysing the distribution and change in home ownership across age, industry and occupational categories between 2016 and 2021, complemented by geographical analysis to identify specific sub-regions of decline or gain and the scales at which change is apparent. This includes focusing on high-cost housing markets, particularly the inner and middle suburbs of Australia's major cities. Based on these results we offer discussion of the extent and intensity of Australia's home ownership crisis and implications for research and policy.

A Commonwealth National Rental Regulation System: Reform options to make tax concessions work harder for low-income tenant social outcomes

Jago Dodson, Liam Davies (co-presenters)

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

This paper outlines a policy proposal for the Commonwealth to introduce a National Rental Regulation System (NRRS). Rental standards are regulated via eight state and territory regimes, which vary in regard to levels of security to tenants, stability of rent, and dwelling outcomes. At the same time, the Commonwealth expends more than $10 billion annually on negative gearing, the capital gains tax discount and Commonwealth Rent Assistance, supports to the private rental sector.

While the Australian constitution places housing within the remit of the states, the Commonwealth retains wide ranging taxation powers. We argue a rental policy framework centred around these taxation powers. The paper sets out the case for a national reform of rental tenancy subsidies and regulation that links landlord access to negative gearing and capital gains discounts to improved dwelling quality and tenancy conditions. We propose a tied structure, which would:

- Establish National Residential Tenancy Standards (NRTS) that exceed state regulation and approximate social housing tenancy conditions (but are consistent with state and territory residential tenancy laws);
- Creation of a four-tiered structure for investor-landlord access to private rental dwelling tax subsidies (NG & CGT discount) scaled to the extent of participation in the NRRS and adherence to NRTS;
- Incentivise matching of regulated properties to Commonwealth Rent Assistance recipients;
- Provide financial support and incentives to landlords who increase energy efficiency of dwellings.

The implementation of the proposed National Rental Regulation System would be broadly cost-neutral to the Commonwealth, depending on system design and extent and structure of investor-landlord participation.

Assembling mass timber construction and post-carbon housing

Louise Dorignon

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Interest in the construction of multi-storey timber buildings as a lower embodied carbon alternative to steel and concrete has increased in recent years in Australia and internationally. Substituting fossil-fuel intensive materials for low carbon timber products is seen as an opportunity to decarbonise the built environment industry, and to produce more sustainable housing. Timber construction is on Australian federal and state agendas, however, some concerns remain around the ability to scale up mass timber construction due to the sourcing of responsible timber in Australia and a lack of attention to what is required to shift practices towards more widespread adoption. Perceived risks and costs associated with mass timber multi-storey developments remain, as does little knowledge about the circularity potential of mass timber buildings or of its end-of-life management.

This presentation investigates the practices and narratives of mass timber industry stakeholders towards a wider uptake of mass timber use in multi-residential construction in Australia and its potential to contribute to post-carbon housing. It argues that the planning, design and construction of mass timber housing are part of a niche and bespoke part of the built environment industry, which has nonetheless promised ways of reshaping the socio-material configurations of housing, especially student accommodation. Through exploring three decarbonisation strategies (waste reduction, material reuse and adaptative building reuse), the presentation will analyse the central role of construction industry actors in attempts at reconfiguring the production and socio-material dimension of housing using mass timber.

From industry innovation to market deregulation: tracing the paradigm shift in Australian housing policy in the 1970s

Rae Dufty-Jones

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

This paper argues that the outcomes of housing policy debates in the 1970s continues to have significant implications for contemporary Australian housing policy. Reports from the two Federal Government inquiries - the 1974 Australian Government Task Force to Investigate Modern Housing Techniques and the 1978 Inquiry into the Cost of Housing - are analysed to reveal how competing paradigms of housing policy intervention - state-supported industry innovation versus market deregulation - were promoted at different points during this decade. While both inquiries sought technical solutions to address the problem of housing affordability, they represented fundamentally different policy philosophies. The 1974 investigation emphasised industry-led innovation and construction efficiency, while the 1978 Inquiry marked a shift toward market-based solutions such as planning deregulation. This paper argues that these competing approaches - state-supported industry innovation versus market deregulation - continue to frame current policy debates, though their historical origins are often overlooked. By excavating these historical parallels, this research demonstrates how current housing challenges reflect long-standing tensions in Australian housing policy rather than wholly new phenomena.

Longitudinal Effects of Housing on Health in Toronto's GTA West

James Dunn, Katherine L.W. Smith, Paula Smith, Rahim Moineddin, Flora Matheson, Stephen W. Hwang, Carles Muntaner, Magdalena Janus, Patricia O'Campo

McMaster University, Hamilton, Canada

Introduction: It is commonly claimed that affordable housing is an important determinant of health, but there are very few longitudinal studies of the effect of housing on health. This paper reports the findings of a quasi-experimental study of the effects of receiving subsidized housing on the common mental disorders at 6-, 12- and 18-months after placement in subsidized housing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) West.

Methods: We recruited and administered a baseline questionnaire to a sample (N=504) of waitlisted applicants for subsidized housing in four municipalities in the GTA West, who were estimated to be near the 'top' of the waitlist. We then waited for participants to be placed in subsidized housing and conducted follow-up interviews with those housed at 6-, 12- and 18-months after placement (N=137) and also with those not housed (N=304) at the same intervals. We use longitudinal data analyses with hierarchical modelling to investigate differences between intervention and comparison groups.

Results: Overall, the results show small short-term improvements in selected outcomes measuring sub-clinical depressive (CES-D-R) and anxious symptomatology (K-6) and general healthy functioning, with some evidence of important gender differences.

Discussion: Receiving subsidized housing appears to result in small improvements in health, but this does not necessarily diminish the importance of subsidized housing. Such housing typically does not result in a large improvement in post-shelter disposable income because the subsidy is modest relative to income. Moreover, the benefits of improved security of tenure associated with subsidized housing may only be relevant to households that experienced acute insecurity at baseline. The current subsidized housing model may not be potent enough to produce a large improvement in health, particularly since other social determinants of health in peoples' lives largely remain unchanged.

Renovations, Maintenance and Upgrading: The Policy and Politics of Improving Standards in the English Private Rented Sector

Alice Earley[1], Alex Marsh[2], Ken Gibb[1]

[1]University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

[2]University of Bristol, Bristol, England

The functioning of the Private Rented Sector (PRS) in the UK has faced much criticism in relation to housing and wealth inequalities. In line with the rapid expansion of the PRS across the UK, much policy-focussed and academic research has highlighted several challenges relating to the policy and politics of the standards of existing homes in the PRS, considering issues relating to renovation, maintenance and upgrading. Research on the PRS has also highlighted the challenges of enforcement, making it more difficult to achieve the standards improvements required to improve tenants' housing experiences. However, there has been less research applying a systems-thinking approach to better understand the functioning of the PRS within the wider housing system, and the types of interventions and reforms required to address these 'wicked' policy problems. This paper contributes to this gap, drawing on interview data collected for Homes for All (online at: https://homesforall.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/01_05_24_Homes-for-All_A-Vision-for-Englands-Housing-System.pdf), a vision for the future of England's homes, led by the Church of England and Nationwide Foundation and drafted by the authors, and additional desk-based research, to explore the key issues facing the PRS in England specifically, using a systems thinking approach. We analyse the current policy and regulatory landscape as a system, considering the implications if government fails to act and this does not change, in order to derive insights regarding more transformative reform in future.

Regulation alone won't fix this: Incentivising professional practice in strata management

Hazel Easthope, Charlie Gillon, Michael Ostwald

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

The paper is written in the wake of a series of scandals regarding serious construction defects in strata-titled apartment buildings as well as hidden kick-backs to strata managers in Australia. In response to the latest scandals surrounding strata managers, there have been calls for greater regulation. In this paper, we juxtapose the 'integrity systems' (Breakey & Stampford 2021) of the loosely regulated para-profession of strata managers with the established and highly regulated profession of architects. Drawing on interviews with both architects and strata managers, we identify common ethical tensions faced by both professions and the mechanisms in place to mitigate them. We argue that while increased regulation of the strata management profession is essential, insights from the highly regulated architectural profession demonstrate that regulation alone will not be enough to ensure professional practice. Operational and organisational pressures will continue, despite regulatory interventions. An integrity system approach allows for a recognition that in addition to fit-for-purpose regulation, other mechanisms are needed to educate and enculturate professionals and to incentivise ethical and professional business practices. The paper concludes by discussing the broader relevance of the findings for the professional practice of a broad range of building professionals and for the construction quality and management of apartment buildings.

Women And Housing After The Lismore Floods (Australia) — A Relational Rights-Based Approach

Lisa Ewenson

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Australia is experiencing a housing crisis and an increase in extreme weather events which result in disaster due to global warming. This largely dry continent, beset by bushfires and floods, is a land of inequality. These inequitable landscapes make recovery from disaster difficult and prolonged for those already marginalised. We know that women in Australia have far greater access to education and employment than 50 years ago, yet the precarious housing existence experienced by many women, and in particular older women, belies these social and economic gains. The interaction of poverty and gender, exacerbated by factors such as domestic violence, financial abuse, broad unpaid caring responsibilities, and prolonged family law property dispute processes reveal that immediate action on increasing affordable and social housing is imperative. It also highlights that a greater understanding of the compounding impacts of climate change and disasters upon women is required. The feminisation of poverty in this Northern Rivers region is clear, and this has led to significant and widespread housing precariousness for women in the area, a situation made worse by the advent of the catastrophic 2022 floods. This paper presents a relational rights-based approach, informed by a feminist ethics of care, to attain the right to adequate housing for all in the Australian context.

Analysis of the factors influencing housing decisions of recent migrants in Australia

Anita Fairuz

University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Housing preferences and consumption patterns of recent migrants in Australia are critical research areas, considering the country's shifting migration patterns and the important roles migrants play in the housing market and broader economy. With migrant demographics shifting from predominantly European to Asian backgrounds, it is very likely that housing preferences have also changed. This study aims to assess the changing housing preferences of recent migrants and the factors driving their choices, alongside examining how spatial segregation of similar ethnic groups contributes to the formation of housing submarkets.

Using stated preference data from two discrete choice experiments and by applying discrete choice modelling techniques, such as multinomial logit, ordered logit, and latent class choice models, this study analyses the preferences for structural, neighbourhood, locational, and financial factors in housing decisions. Additionally, by using housing sales data and incorporating hedonic regression approach, the study further assesses how these preferences shape housing submarkets.

Findings indicate that financial constraints, particularly high initial deposits, are a primary barrier to homeownership for recent migrants, extending their stay in the rental market and intensifying rental demand. Regarding structural design, recent migrants show lower inclination for indoor and outdoor space, however, preferring more rooms and bathrooms in the limited space, which suggests a greater likelihood of accepting dense housing structures. An important insight on spatial segregation reveals that migrants with similar cultural backgrounds often cluster in neighbourhoods due to shared housing preferences and demand for culture-specific amenities (e.g., traditional food, shops, mosques). This pattern reflects structural rather than social homophily, with segregation driven more by practical needs than a desire for cultural closeness. These insights carry important implications for urban planning and housing policy, underscoring the need for diverse housing supply and efficient distribution of amenities to support cultural integration and reduce segregation.

Christchurch City Centre: Valuing Urban Greenery for Sustainable Housing Development, Resilience, and Community Cohesion Post-Earthquakes

Akram Fatourehchishabestari, Olga Filippova, Michael Rehm

The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Despite significant recovery in other areas, Christchurch City Centre continues to face challenges in attracting permanent residents post-earthquakes. The Central City Housing Programme Project 8011, launched in 2018 aspired to attract 20,000 permanent residents by 2028. Most recent statistics estimate the current population at around 8,000. Current inner-city development practices, dominated by compact one- and two-bedroom townhouses with limited amenities such as car parks and outdoor green spaces, have shifted demand to the nearby suburbs and instead increased the growth of short-term rentals such as Airbnb.

Using qualitative and quantitative methods, this study examines factors that contribute to a liveable city centre and promote population growth. The interviews with central residents reveal the importance of urban greenery, with participants emphasising neighbourliness and social connectivity enhanced by green spaces and their potential for community-led events. Additionally, hedonic price modelling confirms that house prices increase significantly with proximity to, or greater availability of pocket parks and vegetation, reflecting their critical social and economic values.

By demonstrating residents' willingness to pay for greenery and its associated social benefits, this research provides actionable insights for urban policies. These findings advocate for a shift towards sustainable and inclusive urban development strategies to promote long-term social, environmental, and economic values, transforming the city centre into a cohesive, liveable, and resilient urban space.

Cohousing - an alternative to the mainstream planning and governance of compact cities in Australia and the UK

Bruno Friedel

The University of Oxford, Oxford, England

The housing crisis debate in Australia and the UK is largely directed into catch-all answers such as increased housing supply by private largescale developers, and more compact, denser cities. This increasingly financialized approach has only the exacerbated the challenge of providing affordable, environmentally sustainable housing, particularly in urban areas. There is a need to consider alternatives to conventional developer-led approaches both to compactness and new housing development. Cohousing offers a contrasting model in urban contexts given its architectural and social design. Multiple households intentionally build to dwell alongside each other, sharing common facilities, resources and supportive networks. This paper looks at two case studies of cohousing projects, one in Leeds, England and the other in Canberra, Australia. Both cities are aiming to drive compactness, and the delivery of housing intensification through urban infill, often on brownfield land, is a vital element of their respective planning approaches. The cohousing projects also aim to introduce greater density and mix of housing to their neighbourhoods, premised on the sharing of space, gardens and technologies. The manner and degree to which planning norms are tested by these cohousing designs will be interrogated, particularly in how they deliver alternatives to conventional urban regeneration, infill and density. Furthermore, it questions whether cohousing forms part of an alternative post-growth planning agenda that rejects the often extractive, unsustainable housing development associated with mainstream compactness. Community-led housing can help to refocus planning, through meaningful public participation in how neighbourhoods and cities respond to the challenge of providing affordable, environmentally sustainable housing. Housebuilding and dwelling must be responsive not only to local housing need but also to the growing climate and ecological crisis, particularly the stress on finite land.

Millennial immigrants on the margins of precarity: a tale of two cities

Rupa Ganguli[1], Laurence Troy[2], Bill Randolph[3]

[1]Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

[2]The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[3]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

The post-WWII suburban homeownership boom in Australian cities was driven by planned immigration to boost population and economic growth, supported by secure jobs, high wages, and social welfare. Over the past 40 years, immigration policy has shifted to favour younger, skilled workers, introducing temporary migration pathways to meet economic needs and labour market changes.

Contemporary immigrants face prolonged renting and uncertain homeownership, with long-term renting common among young adults in Anglosphere countries. Rising employment-income insecurity and reliance on familial support for home purchases are prevalent. Many international students and immigrants live in informal, sub-standard housing, experiencing overcrowding, discrimination, and rental unaffordability. Immigrant sub-groups often face labour market precarity, including insecure jobs, poor conditions, skills-job mismatch, and low wages. The plight of young, highly skilled immigrants on the margins of housing and economic precarity remains unexplored.

This paper fills this gap by focusing on two of Australia's largest cities – Sydney and Melbourne – and drawing upon surveys of 3,000 millennials aged 25-39 years and follow up interviews. The results reveal that despite having high levels of education, millennials face challenges in securing permanent and well-paying jobs, along with transitioning from renting to home ownership, their 'Great Australian Dream'. In comparison with Australian born, overseas born young immigrants are more likely to reside in private-informal rental housing, experience rental stress, move homes frequently and be dis-satisfied with their housing. There is a statistically significant association between being an immigrant and employed casually or part-time, hold fixed term job contracts, work in multiple jobs and be under-employed. These young immigrants cannot tap into parental – familial (financial/non-financial) support to live independently and purchase a home in the next five years.

This raises question whether Australian immigration-labour market-housing policy frameworks are collectively ensuring equitable outcomes for future generations born in Australia and offshore.

Where are essential workers moving from and to? Examining evidence of push and pull factors

Catherine Gilbert, Zahra Nasreen, Nicole Gurran

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

In Sydney, as in many other cities internationally, there is growing policy concern about the effects of declining housing affordability on workers who perform essential public services. Required to be physically present to perform their work, and to live proximate in order to be 'on call', the growing distance between where essential workers live and where they work is presenting challenges for service delivery. While research has documented declining rental and purchase affordability for this cohort, and evidence of outward migration, the push and pull factors shaping where essential workers are moving from and to is not well understood. Building on research on gentrification and displacement, we ask: (1) to what extent has the geography of where low- and moderate-income workers in teaching, healthcare and policing live and work changed over two decades? and (2) what factors appear to be influencing patterns? We address these questions using a combination of statistical and spatial analysis of Census and housing market data for Sydney and surrounding regions. The findings reveal that the proportion of essential workers residing in outer suburbs and exurban areas has increased over consecutive census periods, despite jobs continuing to be concentrated in inner Sydney. While push factors, such as rising property prices and rents and limited eligibility for affordable housing partially explain this pattern, pull factors including the accessibility of ownership in far outer suburbs and exurban areas are also relevant in interpreting spatial patterns. We argue that understanding the factors shaping residential location decisions is important for designing effective policy interventions to retain essential workers in expensive housing market areas.

Diverse density decisions: understanding owner-occupier perceptions and preferences of apartment building types in New South Wales

Charlie Gillon, Hazel Easthope, Yunzheng Zhang

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Debates about housing supply and housing density tend to simplify the diversity of apartment building types and options. This results in a limited understanding of consumer demand in the apartment market: what kinds of apartment buildings purchasers are looking for, and why. In this paper, we report on findings from a research project investigating the decisions and choices of recent apartment purchasers in NSW. A statewide survey (n=210 owner-occupiers) and follow-up interviews (n=17 owner-occupiers) explored preferences, perceptions and decisions made before, during and after their apartment purchase. Bringing together insights from the survey and interviews, we identify a diverse set of features that make apartment buildings appealing to buyers, and explore how attributes such as building age, building size (number of apartments) and building form and scale (number of storeys) were viewed by owner-occupiers as sources of quality and risk.

The paper contributes to a growing literature that focuses on the people, places, and politics of suburban densification, bringing attention to diverse consumer motivations for medium-high density living. More robust accounts of owner-occupiers in apartments - an increasingly influential segment of the apartment market - can help inform transport-oriented development policy objectives and the challenge and opportunity of planning and delivering apartment housing in densifying suburbs.

Beyond Planning Hacks: Understanding the Regulatory Ecosystem of Collaborative Housing

Laura Goh

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

As collaborative housing gains momentum in Australia, jurisdictions are increasingly attempting to 'hack' their planning systems to accommodate this emerging typology. However, this research demonstrates that focusing solely on planning reform overlooks how a broader regulatory ecosystem—including construction codes and unit titling laws—creates significant barriers to cohousing development. Through a detailed case study of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT), this study examines how multiple regulatory domains interact to impede the delivery of sustainable and community-oriented housing solutions. The research analyses two concurrent policy approaches: traditional planning reform and an experimental Demonstration Housing Project, revealing how even well-intentioned government interventions can fall short when they fail to recognise cohousing's unique characteristics and its fundamental differences from conventional multi-unit developments. The methodology combines systematic policy analysis of the ACT's evolving regulatory framework with in-depth stakeholder interviews and site visits to existing and emerging cohousing projects. Initial findings reveal significant tensions between current regulatory frameworks and cohousing communities' sharing and sustainability aspirations, particularly in areas of common space design, sustainability infrastructure, and innovative ownership structures. This study contributes to broader discussions about institutional barriers to collaborative housing by providing empirical evidence of regulatory constraints beyond traditional planning controls. The findings have implications for scaling up collaborative housing solutions across Australia and internationally, demonstrating the need for comprehensive regulatory reform rather than piecemeal planning system modifications. While policy experimentation provides valuable opportunities for innovation, the findings suggest that successful scaling of collaborative housing solutions requires a holistic understanding of regulatory barriers across planning, building, and property law domains.

Monetary Policy and the Homeownership Rate in Australia

James Graham, Avish Sharma

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

How does monetary policy affect the Australian homeownership rate? A monetary contraction may have contrasting effects on ownership due to rising interest rates, falling household incomes, and lower house prices. To investigate, we build a macroeconomic heterogeneous household life-cycle model with housing tenure decisions, mortgage finance, and an exogenous stochastic process to capture the macroeconomic effects of monetary policy. Following a contractionary shock, homeownership initially falls due to rising mortgage rates, but rises over the medium term given falling house prices. Across households, young and low-income households are disproportionately affected by the impact of changing interest rates and house prices. We also show that differences in mortgage credit conditions, mortgage flexibility, and household expectations formation can amplify homeownership dynamics following a shock.

Local Decision Making for Homelands Housing

Liam Grealy

Menzies School of Health Research,

Charles Darwin University, Darwin, Australia

The 2006 Northern Territory Emergency Response ('the Intervention) and simultaneous local government reforms dismantled community councils and ushered in a public housing system for remote communities. At the same time, a sharp distinction was drawn between remote communities and homelands through the prioritisation of secure tenure, growth communities, and disinvestment from homelands. In recent years, the pendulum has swung in the other direction, with NT Government policy promoting the return to community control of remote housing. Under Closing the Gap, priority reforms emphasise the importance of shared decision making and building a strong Aboriginal community controlled sector.

This paper draws on two projects: an ongoing evaluation of the Homelands Housing and Infrastructure Program (HHIP); and a project for the Joint Steering Committee for Remote Housing NT (JSC-RHNT) focused on options to increase Aboriginal control of the remote housing system. The HHIP is based on $100m in Australian Government funding for homelands housing, the first such funding for Northern Territory (NT) homelands in almost a decade. Consistent with other NT Government policy such as Local Decision Making, the HHIP has sought to increase the participation of Aboriginal representative organisations and householders in decision making about homelands housing. This paper considers the mechanisms by which this has been attempted. It considers how representation has been structured and how Aboriginal-led decision making has been both supported and circumscribed. In doing so, it examines the challenges of Aboriginal self-determination as this interacts with existing bureaucratic arrangements.

Community Response to COVID-19: An Analysis of Rental Housing Cooperatives in Melbourne, Australia, and Choluteca, Honduras

Nestor Guity Zapata

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions have had well-documented negative effects on both private and social rental sectors worldwide. However, research into how alternative rental models, such as housing cooperatives, have navigated these challenges remains limited. Housing cooperatives, distinguished by their emphasis on democratic decision-making, education, training, and a strong commitment to community well-being, may yield outcomes that differ significantly from those of traditional rental arrangements focused on individual needs. This study investigates how rental housing cooperatives responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and examines whether the crisis posed challenges to their guiding principles. By adopting a social practices framework, the analysis explores the formal and informal measures taken by cooperative members to address the pandemic. Additionally, it examines the broader implications of these actions within cooperative models in two distinct contexts: Australia and Honduras. Through in-depth interviews with 15 cooperative residents, the study uncovers that members employed both ongoing cooperative practices and specific measures to mitigate the negative impacts of the pandemic. The findings reveal that these cooperative responses were instrumental in alleviating the hardships caused by COVID-19 and, in some cases, in fostering innovative solutions. The lived experiences of cooperative members during the pandemic invite a deeper reflection on the unique role of housing cooperatives within the rental sector. They also highlight the value of collaborative housing arrangements and their capacity to enhance housing-based community resilience, particularly in times of crisis. This study underscores the importance of fostering alternative rental models as a means of building more resilient housing systems.

Subsidiary supply? Situating shared housing in Australia's rental system

Nicole Gurran, Zahra Nasreen, Pranita Shreshta

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Share housing is increasingly recognised as an important part of Australia's rental market. Formed within the existing dwelling stock, in theory the supply of share accommodation should respond swiftly to shifts in housing demand. Yet its traditional status as an informal tenure negotiated between friends or acquaintances often without the mediation of a commercial real estate agent has meant that data on the share sector is ad hoc and limited. This paper begins to address this knowledge gap by drawing on longitudinal data from the share housing platform 'Flatmates.com', to examine the supply of share accommodation offered over three years in Australia's most expensive and largest three cities; Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane. To test the responsiveness of the share market relative to overall housing demand, we compare share trends with reference to the 'formal' or conventional supply and cost of rental housing for the same period. We also add a third dimension in comparing the relationship between advertisements placed by people seeking accommodation in the shared sector against rents and vacancies in the formal rental market. Our findings provide critical insights into housing market trends at the lower end of the market, particularly in response to key demand side shifts across the Covid and post-Covid era. Overall, we ask whether sharing is an appropriate housing option for those now shut out of the conventional rental market. Our study contributes to the growing literature on informal housing markets in the so called global north and specific implications for policy makers and planners charged with addressing the needs of low income renters.

Social outcomes of the housing market under climate change

Peyman Habibimoshfegh, Nader Naderpajouh

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Climate change results in unequal social outcomes within housing markets. Here we use the Australian housing market data to examine the disparate social outcomes of the housing market under climate scenarios presented by the shared socio-economic pathways. Our results suggest that even sustainable pathways with expected societal benefits exacerbate social inequalities, for example by disproportionately imposing financial burdens on tenants. Specifically, we demonstrate how intervention mechanisms, including insurance premiums, taxes, and mortgage rates, can counterproductively deepen social inequalities by increasing unaffordability and homelessness. These results call for contextually defined housing policies that support targeted intervention mechanisms for just housing outcomes in the face of climate change.

Indoor environmental quality in social housing and impacts on health

Shamila Haddad, Arianna, Brambilla

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Social housing residents, who are often older, unemployed, or have a disability or chronic health condition, face multiple disadvantages. They typically lack resources for climate adaptation and often reside in homes poorly suited to withstand extreme cold and heat. The thermal performance of these dwellings, along with their indoor environmental quality, is frequently overlooked in the context of social housing compared to the general building stock in Australia. Many social housing dwellings in New South Wales (NSW) fall below minimum indoor temperature thresholds, increasing the risk of mould growth and related health issues. This issue is particularly pronounced in older homes built before 2003, which lack energy efficiency measures and national standards, leading to higher energy bills and challenges in maintaining adequate heating and cooling.

Cold indoor environments significantly raise the risk of respiratory and cardiovascular conditions and can lead to hypothermia, particularly among the elderly. Cold indoor temperatures also exacerbate mould growth and respiratory infections, with damp and cold housing linked to health concerns such as asthma, allergies, weakened immune systems, and allergic lung diseases. Similarly, higher indoor temperatures pose health risks to building occupants, especially elderly individuals (aged 65 and over), children, and those with cardiovascular or respiratory illnesses. Mental health, an integral component of overall well-being, is also affected by housing quality, lack of access to natural light, unwanted noise and availability of green spaces, with common reported issues in social housing including emotional distress, anxiety, and depression.

Home as a Workplace: Implications of Working from Home (WFH) on Housing and Location Choices – A Quantitative and Qualitative Study

Tmnit Halefom, Magnus Moglia, Christian Nygaard

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Since the COVID-19 pandemic, working from home (WFH) has become widely adopted amongst office workers, yet the implications of WFH on housing and location choices remain relatively unexplored.

We adopted a mixed methods methodology, utilising both quantitative and qualitative methods. Firstly, using longitudinal data from the Household, Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey, we analysed workers' housing decisions after transitioning to WFH. Secondly, to complement the quantitative analysis and provide a richer understanding of the underlying causes of the statistical analysis results, we conducted a series 13 qualitative interviews in 2024 with individuals from various office workers who WFH.

Statistical analysis results: In our analysis of 1,950 individuals who began WFH and who also relocated, we found that 53.7% moved to homes with more rooms (coff: 0.0814). Larger family size (coef: 308.01), higher income (coef: 5.89), and greater distance (coef: 0.01) were associated with moving to more rooms, while older age (coef: -0.0063) and renting (coef: -0.44) were associated with moving to fewer rooms. We also found that beginning to WFH was associated with moving further away from the office than would otherwise be expected.

Interview findings: Qualitative results suggest that WFH provides greater flexibility in residential choices which drives higher demand for larger homes, as well as demand for housing further away from the office location. This was also found to be in part due to the need for changed use of the home, for example dedicated, personalized workspaces. Other reasons for relocation included changing priorities, such as seeking better neighbourhoods with social connections, support, and green spaces.

Renters, low-income households, and older workers tended to prioritise locations with proximity to family or support networks over house size, while high-income households saw suburban investments as long-term assets and tend to prioritise a larger house.

These findings highlight the need for targeted housing policies to address the diverse but changing needs of different demographic groups, considering the disruption to housing markets caused by the significant increase uptake of WFH practices.

Older women advocating for more secure housing futures

Therese Hall

Western Sydney University, Sydney, Australia

The convergence of a rapidly ageing population and an increasingly unaffordable housing sector is producing a growing proportion of older women living on the edge of homelessness. For my PhD, I am researching the experience of older women sourcing (or failing to source) support when living in unstable housing. I interviewed 37 older women living in campervans, post-flood pods, couch surfing with friends or family, or unaffordable private rentals in the Northern Rivers of New South Wales and the Gold Coast of Queensland.

My research identifies some of the distinctive ways that older women are navigating their housing instability. One of my findings is the emerging role of older women as housing advocates. On encountering unstable housing, some older women turn to family and friends, others register on the public housing waiting lists. When support is not forthcoming, older women are developing hybrid ways to advocate for themselves and their cohort. Many are practicing various forms of housing advocacy and activism for the first time.

I have identified three main ways that older women are taking part in housing activism. The most overt mode of activism that my research participants practiced was public protest and direct action. The second was collective re-visioning, which I describe as out-of-the-box thinking that reimagines housing systems as "vehicles for collective welfare" (Fields et al. 2023, p.7). The third was quiet activism. I define this as online research, speaking back to housing service personnel and the education of family and friends who often feign ignorance of older women's housing status.

Older women in precarious housing are creating 'unmapped possibilities' (Di Feliciantonio 2017, p.42) by undertaking such nuanced forms of small-scale resistance. This paper considers how these small-scale advocacy practices affect older women's subjectivities, their material resources and their hopes for a better housing future.

Learning the Hard Way: CALD international students in rental accommodation in Australia

Theresa Harada[1], Ross Gordon[1], Gordon Waitt[2]

[1]University of Technology Sydney

[2]University of Wollongong

Domestic and international students have been identified as vulnerable to energy poverty (Clark et al. 2021; Nazarahari et al. 2021; Thompson et al. 2018; Valenti & Gouveia 2024). In Australia, international students also experience high rates of financial stress which has been shown to impact their ability to study (see Brownfield et al. 2020). Given the context of the current cost-of-living crisis, the political rhetoric which points to immigration as a key driver of the housing crisis, and cuts to international student numbers creating turmoil in the educational sector, we wanted to know how Culturally and Linguistically Diverse (CALD) international students who live and study in Australia fared in the private rental market. Our mixed method project collected temperature and humidity data for winter and summer, generated NatHERS scorecards, and drew on in-depth qualitative interviews with 31 CALD international students in two climate zones in the Sydney Illawarra area. Our preliminary results suggest that rental housing in Australia presents a range of challenges. CALD students endure harsh thermal conditions often in poor quality housing without heating or cooling appliances, are charged premium prices, are reticent to complain for fear of lease termination, and are unaware of their rights as renters.

References

Brownfield, N. R., Thielking, M., Bates, G., & Morrison, F. (2020). Does poverty impact student academic outcomes and wellbeing in Australian universities? A systematic review. Journal of Social Inclusion, 11(2), 4-19.

Clark, I. K. H., Chun, S., O'Sullivan, K. C., & Pierse, N. (2021). Energy poverty among tertiary students in Aotearoa New Zealand. Energies, 15(1), 76.

Nazarahari, A., Ghotbi, N., & Tokimatsu, K. (2021). Energy poverty among college students in Japan in a survey of students' knowledge, attitude and practices towards energy use. Sustainability, 13(15), 8484.

Thomson, H., Petrova, S., & Bouzarovski, S. (2018). Energy poverty and vulnerability. Taylor & Francis.

Valente, I., & Gouveia, J. P. (2024). Growing up in discomfort: Exploring energy poverty and thermal comfort among students in Portugal. Energy Research & Social Science, 113, 103550.

Collaborative housing and housing affordability, social integration, health and wellbeing outcomes for older people: lessons for Australia

Catherine Hastings[1], Ivette Arroyo[2]

[1]Macquarie University, Australia

[2]Lund University, Sweden

Australia faces a housing affordability crisis. Based on current trends, an increasing proportion of the population will reach retirement age without owning their own home, unable to access social housing, and reliant on the private rental market. Older Australians increasingly risk significant financial insecurity and housing precarity. Also, as people age, they are more likely to experience loneliness and isolation and suffer worse health and wellbeing outcomes.

Collaborative housing is an alternative community-led housing form where residents live in complete apartments whilst sharing purpose, common spaces and other resources. Collaborative housing has a long tradition in Scandinavia and re-emerged in Europe in the last decades. This paper reports findings from the CO-HOPE (Collaborative Housing in the Pandemic Era) project, which investigated how residents of collaborative housing communities in Sweden, Austria, France, Spain and Finland coped during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study used a critical realist mixed-methods approach, including a survey, interviews, site observations, and focus group discussions. Its emphasis was on investigating outcomes for collaborative housing residents in the domains of housing affordability, social integration and health during a public health crisis. What can be learnt from Europe about living and ageing in collaborative housing settings relevant to housing and aging policy in the Australian context?

The analysis focuses on the little-studied experience of older adults living in collaborative housing settings. We found that common spaces, demographic structure, self-organisation and sharing practices are four factors generating outcomes for older adults across areas of housing affordability, social possibilities (social integration and feelings of self-value), and wellbeing. Collaborative housing enables prolonged independence in later life and engenders positive mental and physical health outcomes, with the potential for reducing financial costs through sharing practices. We suggest how these findings could inform Australian policies to improve housing, aging-in-place and wellbeing outcomes for older Australians.

The Effects of Demand-Side and Supply-Side Assistance on Precarious Housing Outcomes: A Cross-National Comparison

Jack Hewton[1], Ranjodh Singh[1], Emma Baker[2], Rebecca Bentley[3], Rachel Ong ViforJ[1]

[1]Curtin University, Perth, Australia

[2]The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

[3]The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

This study examines the extent to which demand-side and supply-side rental assistance protect against housing precariousness experienced by low-income renters, and whether these impacts are shaped by institutional settings. By applying panel data modelling to Australian and UK data, we estimate how a change in assistance affects low-income renters' odds of experiencing housing stress, rent arrears, forced moves and overcrowding in both countries. We find overall, supply-side assistance offers more effective protections against precarious housing than demand-side assistance. This suggests the growing expansion of demand-side assistance in both countries at the expense of supply-side assistance is likely to result in growing housing precariousness among low-income renters. The cross-country comparisons uncover the importance of institutional settings. For instance, supply-side assistance offers greater protection against housing stress, rent arrears and overcrowding in Australia than the UK. This can be attributed to design features within the Australian system that are more effective buffers against housing precariousness than the UK system.

Explaining high rates of home ownership in Lao PDR: An anthropological approach

Holly High

Deakin University, Geelong, Victoria, Australia

In Lao PDR, 96% of people own their own home. About 2% rent, while 2% live rent free or listed no occupancy status in the 2015 census. This means Laos has one of the highest – if not the highest – rates of home ownership in the world. This paper takes an anthropological approach in identifying key factors that contribute to Laos' high home ownership rates, including matrilineal traditions of inheritance, Lao-style socialism, and the concepts that underpin economic decision-making. It argues that Laos' home ownership rates are linked to local political philosophies that remain little understood outside Laos, but which hold vital lessons for the housing crises unfolding in our region more broadly.

Dual Disruptors: The Role of Airbnb and International Students in Shaping Kensington's Rental Market

Parian Hoseini

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Sydney's rental market is shaped by diverse supply and demand factors; alongside policy interventions. A portion of the rental demand in global cities like Sydney may originate from overseas, reshaping residential neighbourhoods through what has been termed 'transnational gentrification'. Many 'Airbnb' service users and international higher education (HE) students, both of which are strongly represented in Sydney, could be globally recognised examples of transnational gentrification forces. More importantly, unlike in many comparator cities, Airbnb and HE student tenancy concentrations substantially overlap in Sydney's eastern and inner suburbs. Airbnb's impact on rental affordability and availability has attracted substantial academic attention, especially since the late 2010s. In contrast, although the intake of international HE students has also risen significantly over the past 10-15 years, the impacts of HE student housing demand on local rental markets has only recently sparked renewed academic, media and policymaker interest, with claims that student renters are a major cause of post-COVID rent inflation. This paper is part of my PhD project, which examines the impacts of these two submarkets on Kensington's local rental market, which accommodates a high concentration of university students' private tenancies, Purpose-Built Student Accommodation (PBSA), and Airbnb. The main data sources used in this study are the Airbnb dataset from 2014 to 2024 from AirDNA, unpublished Rental Bond Board (RBB) data at the postcode level and PBSA capacities for 1994 to 2024, along with publicly available census and UNSW enrolment data. Using descriptive statistics, this research explores the temporal profile and extent of HE students' influence on Kensington's rental market and examines PBSA's role in alleviating rental pressure. Additionally, I analyse the Airbnb representation and its scale relative to the mainstream rental market. Resulting insights will contribute to ongoing debates on how these two factors may impact in shaping the current and future state of the rental market in university-adjacent areas like Kensington.

Real Estate Realities: Architecture as a consumer good.

Alexandra Jablonowska

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Reality television and architecture arguably occupy opposite ends of the low/high cultural spectrum. By design, the inception of the Home And Garden Television Network (HGTV) in 1994 was primarily focused on DIY content and advice on renovations, home-buying and flipping and centered on amateur practices rather than design professionals. A shift reflected in the decades-long successes of MTV's Cribz (2000-2010) and Channel 4's Grand Designs (1999) to luxurious and high-end real estate meant architects could no longer be ignored; primarily concerning the perceived value of a property. Selling Sunset (2019)[1] and its subsequent spin-offs represent the re-framing of luxury real estate as its own means of social mobility. This is done through the reality TV imperative of narrative which heroically centers real estate agents as the audience intermediaries, and how careers in real estate offer access to this very narrow class of wealth. This paper seeks to understand how the public is positioned by popular media to understand the status and effect of architecture as a professional discipline through the general trends of reality TV programming. An interest in the houses of the wealthy and influential has pervaded architectural history and popular imagination and the ecosystem of reality television has been quick to oblige, this paper seeks to examine the stance of real estate agents towards architects as a synecdoche of how the audience is ultimately positioned; to view architecture itself as a consumer good.

[1] Selling Sunset (2019) has two official spin-offs: Selling the OC (2022) and Selling Tampa (2021). Also by Netflix is the recent Owning Manhattan (2024), and Buying Beverly Hills (2022). Amazon is responsible for Luxe Listings: Sydney (2021) and Luxe Listings: Toronto (2024). Other international examples include Dubai Hustle (2022) and The Parisian Agency: Exclusive Properties (2022). Selling Sunset has been the most obvious trend maker here with many other productions trying to capitalise on its success; Selling Super Houses (2023), Crazy Rich Agents: Selling Dream Homes (2023), and Selling The Hamptons (2022) just to name a few.

Global Finance and the Neoliberal Home

Keith Jacobs

University of Tasmania, Hobart, Australia

In recent years, the high cost of housing has led to a surge in speculative investment by wealthy householders and corporations. The impetus for this form of investment is the profit that can be made from the shortage of affordable housing, as rents and dwelling prices increase. Governments, while portending that they wish to address this shortage, have continued to maintain fiscal arrangements that incentivise speculation. In short, we now have a housing system that operates as a vehicle to accentuate inequality and entrench social division. This paper considers how we should understand the current housing system especially the roles played by global finance and the ideology of neoliberalism. The key claim is that recent developments in global finance and promulgation of neoliberal ideology have exacerbated inequality and changed housing's role in the economy and social life. Whilst governments wish to convey to their electorates that they are addressing the housing crisis, their policies in many ways reinforce the class fissures that are all too apparent in contemporary nation states.

Housing in all policies

Laura James

The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

What can housing research learn through reconsideration of the concept, the social role? This research piece reconsiders the social role concept through analysis of people's housing experience, as illustrated through survey data on Australian housing conditions (the Australian Housing Conditions Dataset (the AHCD), Baker et al. 2023). Three characteristic patterns of the social role of housing are identified and argued as useful for research and communications that may change the (urban) status quo, for example, for constructions and regovernance of housing as a social responsibility of multisectoral, or all, public policy portfolios. An action-oriented or pragmatic reconception of housing roles and impacts is defended to focus on social structural aspects of authority. In treating housing roles as dynamic and variable sites of mutual accountability, a pragmatic perspective may also contribute understanding of the creativity that is inherent in agency and normativity. On these terms, the social role is fruitful for more considered forms of housing action, such as public housing investment, and more equitable processes that would see housing serve a wider variety of interests, for example, where a greater number of populations would participate in capital gains or have advantage.

Addressing housing inequality as a root cause of climate change health impacts

Edward Jegasothy, Gareth Bryant

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Housing is a key determinant of health, but also of vulnerability to climate change impacts. Housing inequality exacerbates the impacts of climate change, and, in turn, climate shocks exacerbate inequality, forming a vicious cycle. Therefore, addressing inequality in housing is crucial to improving the health of the population from climate impacts.

The health risks of climate change are mediated by housing inequality at two levels. First, the physical impacts of climate change, such as intensifying natural disasters and rising temperatures, are experienced unequally according to housing conditions. Second, the transition risks of climate change, such as access to clean energy sources or climate insurance products, are distributed unequally by the housing market.

Therefore, there are multiple intersecting dimensions the relationship between climate change, health and inequality, including quality, affordability, tenancy rights, ownership, finance, insurance, technology, and geographic factors, which are shaped by structural inequalities in the housing market itself, but responsibility for which span multiple jurisdictions and departments of government. It is critical, therefore, to understand the nature of inequality in housing, as a determinant of health, and connecting these elements to the policies and institutions which facilitate them.

This work presents a framework to link evidence of inequality and community concerns regarding housing to hold government accountable for existing policy failures, and promote transformative policy to break the cycle of housing inequality and climate change impacts. Specially, we outline how unequal positions in the housing market – from people experiencing homelessness, tenants in public and private rental markets, through to mortgaged and outright homeowners, and property investors – shape inequalities in the health impacts of climate change, and connect proposals to address housing market inequalities with agendas for a just transition.

The Healthy Homes Initiative: The outcomes from a large-scale community-led intervention programme to improve housing in Aotearoa New Zealand

Ellie Johnson, Nevil Pierse, Elinor Chisholm, Philippa Howden-Chapman

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

In Aotearoa New Zealand almost 30,000 children are hospitalised each year with preventable housing-related conditions, where Māori and Pacific children are particularly at risk. The Healthy Homes Initiative (HHI) is a government-funded intervention package aimed at improving the health of children at risk of housing-related illness in low-income families. Unlike other large-scale housing interventions which resettle families in better quality housing, the HHI provides interventions to the home. These interventions are based on previous evidence-based research and include insulation, heating, draught stopping, minor repairs, mould removal, energy efficiency advice and referrals to other services. This programme is delivered by community providers with a strong focus on community partnership and an equity lens.

We used the Statistics NZ Integrated Data Infrastructure to explore long-term health outcomes for participants of the HHI. This database features individual-level government records, which we linked to the HHI community dataset of over 20,000 referred people. We then constructed a cohort of over 75,000 individuals who lived in HHI households, where nearly half the cohort were either Māori (48.7%) or Pacific (46.1%). For this cohort, we then examined all-cause hospitalisations experienced in the years after receiving the home-based intervention, compared to before. These results showed an impressive reduction in hospitalisations by 19.8%, or approximately 9,745 hospitalisations per year. In addition to improvement in health, there was also an increase in employment as well as a reduction in receipt of benefits.

The HHI provides a community-led response to addressing housing-related health disparities. It also emphasizes the need for strong enforceable minimum housing standards. The learnings from the HHI are applicable internationally where housing systems globally are facing numerous challenges. This applies especially for countries with similar experiences to NZ of housing-driven health inequities, poor housing affordability and availability, and weak housing policy.

“Guilty as charged”: public housing estates as sites of dwelling justice

David Kelly, Priya Kunjan, Libby Porter

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

This paper critically examines the evolution of public housing renewal in Melbourne, exploring what has changed, what remains unchanged, and the implications for the future of dwelling forms in this contemporary Australian city. It situates public housing estates as vital parts of the urban economy, analysing their historical and contemporary functions, and their evolving place within the shifting landscape of urban governance. We argue that public housing renewal in Victoria increasingly functions as an opaque vehicle for innovating governance arrangements, introducing new modes of capital extraction through subsidies, novel rent collection practices, and reconfigured service delivery mechanisms. This approach is emblematic of broader transformations in urban governance, reflecting a shift toward leveraging housing as an instrument for market-based urban strategies.

We specifically examine the opaque decision-making processes surrounding estate renewal in Victoria, focusing on the conditions under which estates are earmarked for redevelopment, who decides, and when these decisions are made. Using the landmark Supreme Court class action as a critical lens (Barry Berih v State of Victoria), the analysis will interrogate the lack of transparency revealed in court, where it was disclosed that no documented process exists for decisions to renew estates, and the deliberations are shielded under the ‘state secrets’ Act. The paper will explore how this absence of accountability intersects with tenant’ claims of human rights violations, theorising the contemporary public housing estate in Australia as an important site of dwelling struggle and contest.

The regulation of families with children in apartments

Sophie-May Kerr[1], Hazel Easthope[1], Cathy Sherry[2]

[1]The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

[2]Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Condominium housing is now ubiquitous in contemporary cities globally. For residents, the success of compact cities depends on built environment quality, social relationships within buildings, and broader social norms. This includes how private and shared apartment spaces are navigated, regulated, and controlled. This paper focuses on the experiences of families with children who comprise a growing cohort of apartment residents. We build on existing research that documents families' experiences of poor design, to recognize the role regulation plays in shaping a sense of home. We theorize regulation at three levels: (1) social regulation as interactions between individuals who influence each other's behaviour; (2) self-regulated behaviours; and (3) institutional regulation through rules and laws. Utilizing narratives of parents raising children in apartments in Sydney, Australia, we argue social norms, neighbourly interactions, and by-laws interact to enforce codes of behaviour that impinge upon family life. Our insights have important implications for the wellbeing and inclusion of families within compact city agendas.

National housing strategy making – Australian and Canadian reflections

Julie Lawson[1], Hal Pawson[2]

[1] RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

[2] University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

This paper concerns the task of national housing strategy-making in two similarly developed federal states, Canada and Australia. Strategies help to define priorities and to provide a rationale for ongoing decision-making. Strategic thinking is the antithesis of an incremental or reactive approach. For the UN study #Housing2030 (UN, 2021), strategic action on housing follows a logic which begins with causal analysis, informing the selection of relevant policies and their design, which are in turn resourced via capable implementation, and adapted following evaluation. The challenge of national housing strategy-making is substantially compounded in countries like Canada and Australia where housing powers and responsibilities are primarily accorded to state or provincial administrations rather than to federal authorities. In this paper we investigate Canada's first-ever venture of this kind, its 2017 National Housing Strategy (NHS). A key focus is the relevance of the NHS for Australia, likewise a country with little recent history of national housing policy leadership, but with a recently elected federal government pledged to develop a formal 10-year plan. Our underlying research involved documentary analysis and interviews with Canadian housing policy stakeholders, with the current paper complementing and extending the coverage of our earlier research report (Martin et al. 2023). Constituting a form of knowledge exchange, that report informed the development of a bill to legislate Australia's National Housing and Homelessness Plan tabled in Australia's federal parliament in 2024.

Housing Tenure and Inequality in Aotearoa New Zealand

Lydia Le Gros, Kimberley O'Sullivan, Nevil Pierse

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

The term 'Generation Rent' has drawn intense political and media interest as homeownership rates among young people have dropped significantly around the world. Unable to enter the property market due to economic uncertainty, stagnating wages, precarious employment, rising house prices and stricter mortgage lending criteria, millennials are increasingly relying on an expensive and insecure private rental sector for housing.

This paper examines this worldwide phenomenon in the New Zealand context by looking at how childhood parental tenure, parental income, and individual income shape housing outcomes for a millennial cohort at age 25. Using data from Stats NZ's Integrated Data Infrastructure, we follow and analyse a cohort of 58,848 people born in New Zealand in 1993. In line with international trends, our findings indicate a sharp rise in private renters across all ethnic groups and tenure backgrounds. We find that childhood parental tenure is the best predictor of tenure status at age 25, followed by cohort income and combined parent income. Additionally, we identify pronounced disparities between ethnic groups with Māori and Pasifika disproportionately represented in rental tenures, increasing as the cohort ages.

This research highlights two key insights into the phenomenon of generation rent: first, housing advantage and disadvantage experienced earlier in life continues to shape the cohort's housing outcomes as they age; and second, wider housing sector transformation within generation rent is linked to the reproduction of socio-economic inequality. Given the important social, health, and economic benefits associated with homeownership in New Zealand, these findings carry important implications for policy and public health.

Development of an Indigenous Wellbeing Guide for Housing Providers: An example from Aotearoa

Lori Leigh, Amber Logan

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

The Māori Wellbeing: A Guide for Housing Providers was created as a learning and development tool for housing providers. Following the publication of A Whakawhanaungatanga Māori Wellbeing Model for Housing and Urban Environments (Penny et al., 2024) and subsequent discussion with housing providers involved with the Public Housing and Urban Regeneration Research Programme, an initiative of the New Zealand Centre for Sustainable Cities, there was an identified need for a guide to support housing providers in translating the model into action. The guide provides a framework for housing providers to assess their engagement with Māori wellbeing, and supports providers to develop their own locality-based wellness strategies. The guide was designed to encourage whakawhanaungatanga (relationship building) and assists providers in translating Māori wellbeing principles into practical, actionable steps. The guide itself contains self-assessment tasks, reflection questions and activities worksheets structured around three key areas: Leadership and Governance, Tenancy Services and Property. The proverb poipoia te kākano kia puawai, 'nurture the seed and it will blossom' guides the pathway for identifying and growing provider capability. This presentation describes the process of development and testing of the guide and the early implementation process, as well as a description of the content and potential applications, for example in other cultural groups. It provides an example of how indigenous wellbeing concepts can be translated into practical actions and applied by housing providers, and shows how the benefits of such actions are not limited to First Nations peoples, but extend to the whole community.

Black box: the application process for social housing in Australia

Iris Levin[1],Fatemeh Aminpour[2], Andrew Clarke[2], Chris Hartley[2], Emma Barnes[2], Hal Pawson[2]

[1]RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

[2]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Social housing in Australia is an extremely scarce resource despite an increasing high need across all states and territories. Due to its scarcity, social housing is directed at those with the highest need. The waiting lists for social housing are long and the wait can stretch over more than a decade. In this climate, the application process for social housing is seen by many as a bureaucratic barrier to a sparse social welfare service. In this paper we draw on a large survey with 1,613 respondents, followed by semi-structured in-depth interviews with 39 people from NSW, ACT, Victoria and Tasmania who had applied for social housing and were on the waiting list or had been allocated social housing in the past year. We use the concepts of agency and individual responsibility to understand the expectations from applicants in their journey to secure housing assistance. We argue that the application process, through its extreme complexity, serves as a first barrier to discourage people from applying. Applicants thought the application process was unnecessarily complex, that it was poorly administered, and that it felt like a black box with little transparency. Many of our participants needed help navigating the application process but some felt that they had been treated badly by housing provider staff. This paper adds to existing literature by bringing to the fore applicants' perspectives of the application process.

Sustaining tenancies by 'caring-with': Care ethics in social housing tenancy management

Abigail Lewis

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

This paper contributes to scholarship that conceptualises housing, particularly social housing, as an infrastructure of care. Care for people with housing needs that cannot be met in the private market is shaped through the provision of social housing, and social housing can also be a site for caring (and careless) practices and relations. Using qualitative data gathered in interviews with tenancy managers at one of the largest social housing providers in Victoria, I argue that tenancy management must be understood as an integral pillar of the caring infrastructure social housing can provide. Tenancy managers who participated in this study understood tenancy management in social housing as a caring practice. They described their role as oriented around sustaining the tenancies of people with high and complex support needs who would otherwise be at high risk of homelessness. However, tenancy managers also faced consistent barriers to the enactment of tenancy-sustainment-as-care, which emerged when caring relationships between the actors involved in sustaining a tenancy broke down. This paper focuses on their experiences of overcoming barriers, resolving conflicts, and successfully sustaining tenancies. The analysis shows that 'caring-with' – i.e., working relationally to build collaborative networks of care-givers and care-receivers – can support tenancy sustainment.

Effects of multiple climate disasters on residential mobility

Ang Li

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Background: As climate-related disasters become more frequent, understanding how people's housing security is affected by multiple disasters is crucial to informing disaster planning and resilience efforts. This study aims to examine the effects of climate disasters on housing stability across multiple exposures and the heterogeneous housing trajectories following disasters according to residential attributes.

Methods: Using longitudinal population based Australian data from 2009-2022, people who experienced at least one disaster (flood, bushfire, or cyclone) are included for each successive disaster with pre- to post-disaster years. Effects of each disaster on the risks of housing instability are estimated using regressions with multi-level fixed effects and multi-way clustering.

Results: The probability of residential relocation decreases over time and with repeated disasters. Residential relocation rates vary according to residential characteristics, with higher mobility observed among private renters, apartment dwellers, urban residents and those living in areas with lower housing prices or lower socioeconomic status. While most groups experienced significant increases in relocation rates only during the first disaster, private renters and residents of areas with lower housing prices or lower socioeconomic status exhibited higher mobility following both the first and subsequent exposures.

Conclusions: Findings point to the importance of understanding the risk factors that contribute to both diminished and increased mobility with repeated disaster exposures. Disaster resilience efforts need to address the heightened housing instability experienced by resource limited populations.

The genealogy of the NSW social housing crisis: An examination of policy and data over time

David Lilley

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

New South Wales (NSW), along with its counterparts across Australia, is in the midst of a social housing crisis. Homelessness services are forced to turn away 50 per cent of people seeking emergency help, social housing demand continues to expand far ahead of supply, the priority waitlist has increased by 30 per cent in the past 12 months alone, and there is a large maintenance backlog. The obvious question this raises is – how did we end up here?

This paper examines the origins, course, implications, and responses to the long-term decline in social housing funding, and the commensurate reduction in social housing as a proportion of total housing supply. This can be traced back to a Commission of Inquiry into Poverty in Australia in the mid-1970s, which found that many social housing tenants were living above the poverty line. This was subsequently used as evidence that social housing was not being appropriately rationed.

Means of coping with the persistent underinvestment in social housing that followed are examined, including increased use of temporary accommodation and short-term private rental assistance products, as well as the redevelopment of large social housing estates to raise funds with which to maintain and expand the social housing portfolio. However, these are revealed to be band-aid solutions that merely disguise, rather than solve, the underlying problem.

Current NSW and Commonwealth Government programs to increase supply are also critically examined. While these are welcome, it is noted that the funding is temporary rather than recurrent, which does not permit transformational change in the underlying social housing funding and business models. The likely outcome of these new supply efforts is that they will merely stall, rather than reverse, the decline in the proportion of social housing, meaning that many of those who are in need of support will continue to miss out.

Foreign Investment in the Build-To-Rent Housing Sector in Australia

Sha Liu

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Foreign investment in Australian housing market is impacted by a series of factors, including the foreign investment policy settings, which was very relaxed in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis around 2008, appealing a large amount of overseas capital flowing into the housing market, while became increasingly tightened from 2016, displacing foreign capital to alternative destinations. In May 2024, the new Federal Budget has revealed the Government will deregulate the restrictions targeting foreign buyers in the Build-To-Rent (BTR) sector, which specifies '[t]o encourage investment in the Build to Rent sector, the Government will allow foreign investors to purchase established Build to Rent developments and apply lower application fees to these investments' (Budget Paper No. 1, 2024, p. 12). As a specific type of housing sector providing large-scale, purpose-built rental housing held in single ownership with professional management services, the BTR developments in Australia are currently dominated by domestic funds/developers, while, in many other countries (such as the US and the UK), global capital is playing an increasingly important role in the sector. However, limited research has been identified examining the foreign capital involvement in the BTR developments in Australia (excluding student housing). This research attempts to explore to what extent the policy deregulation will incentivise foreign investment and facilitate the provision of (non-student) rental housing in the local market. Specifically, through conducting comparative studies of the UK and the US where global capital has engaged in the BTR housing production, this research will compare foreign investment policy settings in different contexts and investigate specific BTR case studies (location, scale, financial arrangement, etc.). The outcomes of the research will contribute to the understanding of the potential benefits and costs by channelling foreign investors to the BTR housing sector and its effectiveness to deliver rental housing in designated locations in Australia.

UK housing at a critical juncture: the role of institutional investors in the growth of the private rented sector

Nicola Livingstone, Philip O'Brien

The University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

The UK's housing market is at a point of instability, crisis and change. The expansion of the state in the postwar social democratic consensus massively expanded public provision through local authority housebuilding and the New Towns programme, while the stable economic growth of the same period raised demand for owner occupied housing supplied by the market. The dominance of neoliberalism from the beginning of the 1980s meant a retrenchment of public provision and a deepening focus on owner occupation. But rising demand for home ownership, facilitated by deregulated mortgage lending followed by post-GFC interest rate cuts, coupled with undersupply, increased house prices to the point of excluding many from the market.

One consequence of this is the growth of the private rented sector. From its nadir in the early 1990s, the private rented sector initially expanded in response to the growth of 'buy to let' landlording as windfall gains to homeowners enabled reinvestment through equity release, as well as the growth of student populations over the same period. More recently, as the purpose-built student accommodation (PBSA) sector became more professionalised and investors identified future growth in the residential market that might enable them to offset uncertainty in commercial markets, financial institutions have entered the picture.

With housing at such a critical juncture, it is vital that housing researchers better understand how pathways for change are playing out, and the burgeoning role of institutional global actors in the UK market, so that policy can respond to structure the housing system to best effect.

Optimising Mental Health in Urban Spaces: Green space, blue space and emotional self-regulation for social housing tenants in Aotearoa

Amber Logan

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

Emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to regulate one's emotional state, and is a key factor in the self-management of mental wellness. The built environment has a significant impact on the ability of individuals and groups to manage mental wellness including not only those who have a mental health condition, but also those who do not. This has important flow-on social and economic benefits as improved emotional regulation is associated with fewer and less-severe incidences of mental health issues as well as numerous psychosocial benefits such as improved social functioning and resilience. Fifty-two social housing tenants across 6 sites took part in in-depth qualitative research interviews covering a range of housing and wellness-related topics. It was found that interaction with natural spaces had significant, positive mental health effects, and that natural spaces were consciously sought out by participants to ameliorate negative mental experiences and to enhance positive experiences. This held true, regardless of the level of mental wellness a person might be experiencing, with no ceiling or floor effects evident. Types of natural space varied from small gardens to parks, grassed areas, trees and water. For the indigenous Māori who participated in the research, the same general effects were noted, with additional aspects associated with Māori as a First Nations people, including identity and connection to land and people. This presentation highlights how the built environment enables and facilitates mental wellness and the critical importance of congruence between the wellness-related behaviours of a population and the opportunities within their environmental to practise them.

Know Your Landlord: inverting the data collection narrative as a means to tenancy advocacy in the private rental sector

Sophia Maalsen, Dallas Rogers

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The increasing uptake of proptech has created a growing market for data in the private rental sector (PRS). Value is generated not only from landed rents but also from the data that is digitally collected throughout the rental process. For example, digital tenancy application forms request large amounts of data on renters, and tenancy requests and disputes are logged in property management systems. Where once the value was located primarily in the rental property, now renter data can also be sold or value added. However, the appetite for data is uneven, with large discrepancies existing between the types and extent of data collected on tenants and the minimal amount of information tenants can access about their landlords. This imbalance reflects a broader power discrepancy between landlords and tenants in the PRS. There is then a politics to this data raising questions of who has to give up their data, how much, how is it used, and what are the impacts of this uneven data sharing?

In this chapter, we discuss how we engaged with these debates on data and its politics by creating a fictional "Know Your Landlord" app. Working with tenants' unions, a design firm, and a social media influencer, we created a digital 'universe' where the data collection tables were flipped.

Resident preferences and the role of green spaces in Australian greenfield estates: Implications for housing futures

Rose Macaulay, Stephanie Lavau, Nicholas S G Williams, Amy K Hahs

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Understanding housing design and green space preferences of residents in new greenfield residential estates is crucial for addressing community wellbeing, social cohesion, and environmental resilience. As housing systems face increasing pressures from unsustainable development patterns, the integration of green spaces offers opportunities to mitigate risks and enhance liveability. However, there is a distinct lack of social research on how emerging and culturally diverse communities interact with green spaces such as public parks and private residential gardens. This study aims to investigate how residents value and interact with green spaces in greenfield residential estates.

We conducted an online survey (n = 1041) targeting residents in new greenfield residential estates across three major Australian capital cities, followed by interviews with 16 residents at a new estate in northern Melbourne. Both methods captured demographic and socio-cultural information and preferences regarding public and private green space, and preferences for hypothetical future homes with varying dwelling-to-plot size ratios.

The online survey revealed strong links between values, interactions with green spaces, nature connection, and life satisfaction. Notably, findings highlight the intersection of housing design and resident preferences, as nearly half (49%) of respondents would opt for a smaller dwelling and larger backyard—an underrepresented housing option in current Australian greenfield developments. Interviews further highlighted the distinct roles of public and private green spaces in attracting residents to the estate and establishing a sense of home and community.

The findings emphasise the critical role of private green spaces in enhancing psychological and social wellbeing, promoting biodiversity, and supporting climate-resilient housing futures. Additionally, public green spaces complement these outcomes by fostering community cohesion and environmental benefits. The research offers a valuable contribution to informing planning and policy reform aimed at creating more sustainable and liveable housing systems.

Housing, Habitability and Human Rights in a Changing Climate

Rowena Maguire, Monica Taylor, Bridget Lewis

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Housing is a recognised human right under international law, encompassing not just the availability of housing but also the habitability, affordability, and cultural adequacy (International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: 1966, art 11; Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: 1991, para 8). Climate change represents a major and multifaceted threat to the right to housing. Most obviously, more prevalent disasters threaten existing housing stock through exposure to fires, floods, and cyclones. Disaster risk also affects the availability and affordability of insurance, which threatens long-term housing security for residents in disaster-prone areas (Climate Council: 2022). In Australia, heatwaves are an under-acknowledged climate threat, which are especially dangerous for older persons, persons with disability, and young children (Rajagopal: 2022, para 14). Extreme heat can significantly impact the habitability of homes, particularly for low-income households and renters who may not be able to afford or access adequate insulation and/or cooling (Taylor: 2023, 2024). These climate factors also influence planning and building regulations, affecting the construction of new housing. This paper will examine the intersections and gaps between housing, disaster and climate policies in Queensland through a human rights lens and identify several areas where critical work is needed.

Linking property capitalisation to the value of travel time savings

Isaac Mann, David Levinson

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The interplay between transport investment and urban development is gaining traction across fields of economics, engineering, and planning. A key area of interest is land and property value capitalisation in response to public infrastructure investment, serving as an alternative approach to project appraisal. This approach not only has direct applications in value capture but also addresses limitations in conventional cost-benefit analysis (CBA). However, limited research connects the value of travel time savings (VTTS) with property capitalisation. VTTS, as the most significant economic parameter in CBA, represents an individual's marginal willingness to pay (WTP) to reduce time spent travelling — an indicator directly factored into property rental and purchase decisions. This study examines this relationship using connected vehicle data to derive commuting times and a rental hedonic panel model across the Sydney metropolitan area to assess resulting rental capitalisation. The value of travel time is then derived from the marginal valuation of commute time over the lease agreement period. Results are compared with conventional VTTS estimates from productivity and preference studies to support using property and land value capitalisation in quantifying project benefits.

Tenancy syzygy? Australian residential tenancies law reform in the 2020s

Chris Martin

The University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

This paper reviews recent developments in Australian residential tenancies law, with a focus on reforms regarding tenancy terminations and evictions, and looks ahead to possible future movements.

Australia entered the 2020s with tenancy reform processes underway in several states and territories. Following the extraordinary COVID-19 pandemic eviction moratoriums and rent freezes, those earlier moves have been largely completed and in quick succession new rounds of reform commenced. The changes have been substantial. For example, whereas at the start of the 2020s all Australian states and territories allowed tenancies to be terminated without grounds, at the start of 2025 'no-grounds' terminations are abolished in three jurisdictions, and three others have abolished them for periodic (continuing) tenancies.

This is an unusual degree of movement in tenancy law reform across states and territories. Just as unusual is the Australian Government re-entering the field for the first time in decades, like Halley's comet, with the National Cabinet's 'Better Deal for Renters' reform agenda. However, despite the appearance of co-ordination and some common themes in the reforms, Australian residential tenancies laws are now at least as divergent as when jurisdictions enacted the first Residential Tenancies Acts in the late twentieth century. There is also little sense of a coherent system of principles governing the new reforms. The paper highlights problematic divergences in current laws and considers principles for future reforms.

“There’s no response once they know your race”: racism and health inequalities in rental housing

Erika Martino, Ang Li, Ilan Wiesel, Rebecca Bentley

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

While many are experiencing challenges in Australia’s current housing crisis, individuals from culturally and racially marginalised (CARM) communities must also contend with racialised discrimination. Despite increasing reports that discrimination is widespread in the rental market, little is known about the different forms of racialised rental discrimination that CARM communities experience and the cognitive, affective and behavioural responses and health impacts of these experiences. Mapping stress and coping theory (Lazarus & Folkman 1984) onto a housing pathways framework (Clapham, 2002), this paper will discuss survey and focus group findings undertaken as part of a collaborative research project with a Victorian-based nonprofit advocacy organisation to consider how racialised rental discrimination impacts health.

Key findings from the survey and focus groups found that individuals from CARM communities experience a high prevalence of both interpersonal and structural forms of discrimination, especially when trying to access housing or when trying to access certain neighbourhoods. The survey and focus groups highlighted various responses to these experiences such as adaptive, mitigative and anticipatory behaviours, affective responses of anxiety, fear, anger, and frustration, and cognitive responses such as rationalisation, heightened vigilance, strategic thinking and self-efficacy beliefs. These responses were interconnected, linked to spatial and temporal dynamics, often impacting social and interpersonal relationships. Further, a rental racism score was developed and analysis of the survey data found that after material deprivation, experiences of rental racism was the second most likely driver of an increase in poor mental health among renters. These findings suggest there is an urgent need to address the current housing crisis within systems of structural racism manifest through housing policies that limit opportunities for secure, affordable and quality housing for CARM communities. We need increased reporting, regulation and advocacy and to improve racial literacy and a diversity of representation among policymakers, agents, and providers.

Rent increases and mental health among low-income renters in Australia

Kate Mason, Rebecca Bentley

The University of Melbourne, Melbourne, Australia

Background: Rent regulation (e.g. rent caps) is a topic of policy debate in many countries, as a possible lever for addressing a lack of affordable housing. In most Australian jurisdictions, rental providers can impose rent increases of any magnitude on renters, putting pressure on household budgets and often forcing households to relocate. Unaffordable and insecure housing has been linked to poor mental health, but the mental health cost of imposed rent increases specifically has not been established. Further, any such mental health effects may be distributed unevenly. Younger adults increasingly face more precarious housing and employment futures than their older counterparts did at the same age, and other household and individual characteristics (e.g. disability, single parent status) can place some groups at a disadvantage in a competitive and weakly regulated rental market: these factors may modify the mental health impact of being subjected to a rent increase.

Methods: For low-income households in the private rental sector between 2001 and 2021, we investigated the relationship between rent increases and mental health (MHI-5 score) in 20-64-year-old participants in the Household Income and Labour Dynamics in Australia survey. Analyses were restricted to non-movers to isolate landlord-imposed rent increases. Alongside descriptive analyses, we used longitudinal regression models to estimate the mental health effect of living in a household subjected to a rent increase and tested whether this was the same for younger (20-44y) and middle-aged (45-64y) renters. We also explored further effect modification by markers of potential rental market disadvantage.

Results: One in 5 people in our sample experienced a rent increase of at least 5% compared to the previous year, and for a majority of those, rent increased by 10% or more. Compared to years when their rent remained stable, people's mental health was worse following a rent increase, but only among younger renters (MHI-5 score 1.6 point points lower after a rent increase of at least 10% (95% CI: -0.3, -2.9)). Estimates were larger for some groups who may face additional disadvantage in the rental market, but statistical evidence of effect modification was not strong.

Conclusions: When subjected to a substantial rent increase, younger private renters in low-income households experience a decline in mental health. Debate about rent caps should consider the potential protective impact on mental health.

The trials of policy change and implementation in housing and homelessness settings – what are the solutions?

Jo McClellan[1], Mr Jon Swain[2]

[1]Two Things Pty Ltd, Sydney, Australia

[2]City of Sydney Council, Sydney, Australia

This session explores the Climate Change, Place, and Mental Health incubator project and its implications for future policy design and implementation. Co-presenters Jo and Jon will highlight the incubator project's uniqueness in integrating practitioners directly into the research program, bridging gaps between research and policy to address global issues effectively.

From a practitioner's perspective, we discuss the challenges in adapting housing and homelessness policies to meet mental health and climate resilience needs. We examine barriers such as data gaps, governance issues, and the struggles to create the right authorising environment. Additionally, we address the design of monitoring and evaluation frameworks to track the progress and success of initiatives.

We share strategies for enhancing policy responsiveness, emphasising the importance of swift, research-informed action amidst rapid climate and policy changes. Building stakeholder networks, support, and new movements through partnerships, media, and engagement are crucial for driving policy adoption.

Through case studies, such as urban heat impact on the homeless in Sydney, we underscore the urgent need for integrated policies addressing climate adaptation for the most vulnerable. This session calls on researchers to prioritise accessibility and practical application, demonstrating the impact of cross-sector partnerships in shaping housing policy to meet emerging climate challenges.

A community-focused housing ownership model for 'generation rent'

Caitlin McGee[1], Matt Daly[1] & Gordon Noble[1], Josh Gilbert[2]

[1]Institute for Sustainable Futures, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

[2]Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research, University of Technology Sydney, Australia

This presentation explores a model for 'build to rent to own' housing that enables renters to own shares in their housing over time. We present the interim findings of a collaboration between the Institute for Sustainable Futures and the Jumbunna Institute for Indigenous Education and Research at UTS, funded by the James Martin Institute's Policy Challenge Grants.

Housing is increasingly unaffordable to rent or buy in Australia, and our private rental market is one of the least secure in the world. Home ownership is declining across all age brackets, but particularly younger households. Lack of secure, affordable housing is creating economic polarisation, intergenerational inequity and decreased social cohesion. Households eligible for social or affordable housing face long wait lists, others are left with the choice of renting or buying in the private market. Unlike some other countries, Australia has no 'in between'.

Leveraging the Australian government's draft 'Build to Rent' legislation, our team is exploring a model that would enable a renter in a development, including affordable rental dwellings, to build an ownership stake in their home without needing a deposit or bank loan and eventually pass their home onto children if they choose, or sell their share. We will explore how this model can enable wealth creation whilst keeping housing more affordable over generations.

Our model will work within the existing draft legislation (which currently excludes cooperatives), however a key focus will be exploring alignment with community-led housing models and identifying supportive longer term policy and system changes.

We will engage with stakeholders across government, finance, housing and property development, and explore the potential for values-aligned investment by Australian superannuation funds who represent keyworkers struggling to afford housing. We will explore how the model can best meet the housing needs of First Nations communities and test it in a variety of demographic and geographic contexts.

Familial Wealth & Young People's Housing Choices

Monique McKenzie

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

The sharpening of economic inequality over the last four decades has shifted the economic opportunities of young adults - particularly regarding housing. With the rapid rise of house prices and rents, alongside slow wage growth and precarious working lives, on average young people now remain economically dependent on their parents much longer than previous generations. This economic dependence manifests in young adult's housing strategies, including continued co-living with their parents throughout their twenties and thirties, receiving financial support for rental payments, and intergenerational transfers for homeownership through direct deposit help or guarantor arrangements. However, to access this support, young adults must have parents willing and able to provide it. This paper looks at the role of familial wealth in shaping young adult's housing conditions throughout their young adult lives. Through a series of semi-structured interviews and life-course surveys with young adults (22-30) in Melbourne, Sydney, Geelong and Newcastle, we demonstrate how intra-family generations are tied together through the need to resolve the challenges presented by the contemporary housing market. Furthermore, by bringing in dynamics of familial wealth, we hope to open the debate on housing inequality beyond the popular lens of generational cleavages.

Housing, energy poverty and health in low-income groups in Beijing from energy culture perspective

Michelle MEI

The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China

The significant impact of housing on health has been extensively documented, and the emergence of household energy poverty, along with its threat to residents' health and well-being, has been a global concern over the past decade. Household energy poverty within unhealthy housing leads to cold living environments, which pose serious threats to health and well-being, particularly affecting health equity among the most vulnerable populations. Low-income households, widely recognized as a disadvantaged group impacted by energy poverty and housing issues, warrant global attention regarding their health challenges and the need for intervention policies.

This study employed a modified energy culture framework to explore the interactive relationships among the material culture of household energy and housing, individual and familial energy norms, and daily household practices faced by low-income families in Beijing as they confront the challenges of energy poverty. The research also examined the health outcomes associated with this interaction. A qualitative research methodology was used for data collection and analysis, gathering insights from the lived experiences of target group regarding energy poverty, housing, energy awareness, and energy behaviours. Using a purposive sampling method, 30 adults from low-income households were invited to participate in one-on-one interviews.

The study purpose is to provide evidence concerning the manifestations and relationships of energy culture among low-income households in Beijing through rich subjective experiential data, and further generate intervention policy recommendations based on findings. The modified energy culture framework is utilized to guide research on housing environments, household energy, and health in developing countries, offering a more comprehensive perspective on the vulnerabilities and health inequality of low-income groups. Evidence from developing countries provides insights for future intervention policies addressing health, housing, and individual perceptions and behaviours related to energy poverty.

Disaster Defaults: The Impact of Extreme Climate Events on Mortgage Borrowers

Daniel Melser, Dieter Brand, Joan Tan

Monash University, Melbourne, Australia

As the climate changes, natural disasters such as floods, hurricanes, and wildfires are likely to increase in their frequency and severity. These developments will have broad implications, including for mortgage borrowers and lenders. This study explores how extreme climate events in the US have impacted the ability of borrowers to service their mortgages. We use detailed data at the MSA level from 2000 to 2022 on mortgage performance, property damage caused by hazard events, and the local economy, to document the impact of these climate events. Our findings show significant effects on severe delinquency, default, and prepayment, as well as the local labour and housing markets. We investigate the implications of these results for banks and whether climate physical events may threaten bank solvency. Our results are discussed in the context of Australia.

Real Estate Agent Tactics: The impact of underquoting regulation in residential real estate markets

Vito Mollica, Haresh Pardasani

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

We investigate the impact of the introduction of regulation to stamp out underquoting practices by real estate agents. Underquoting occurs when a property is listed for sale at a price that is lower than its likely selling price. Utilizing the population of listings and home sales data from 2014 to 2018, classified into pre-enactment, enactment, and post-commencement periods, we provide evidence of the prevalence of underquoting practice pre regulation and identify a reduction in underquoting practices just after the law was enacted. These findings are robust to location fixed effects at the local geographic area level and controlled for market index estimates, various property and listing characteristics, and other factors—spatial or temporal.

Older private renters' fears of eviction and secure occupancy in later life

Joelle Moore

The University Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Queensland has the highest proportion of people aged 55 and over living in the private rental sector of any Australian jurisdiction, with the number of private renters in this demographic increasing by 70% between 2011 and 2021, from around 100,000 to over 170,000. Most of these older renters are on low incomes (often a government benefit), thus housing affordability remains a significant challenge. According to the latest Anglicare Rental Affordability Snapshot only 1% of rentals were affordable to a couple on the Age Pension in Southern Queensland in March 2024. This presentation draws on recent interviews with older lower income private renters in South East Queensland, exploring their lived experiences of 'home'. Existing research highlights the importance of home in providing stability, control, autonomy, and safety, yet for many private renters, the inability to make a home leads to housing precarity, stress, and fear of eviction – what Madden and Marcuse (2016) refer to as residential alienation (the opposite to 'feeling at home'). This presentation examines crucial factors which shape their perspectives – in addition to tenancy regulations and de jure security – including housing affordability, relationships with landlords or agents, support networks, and the suitability of the dwelling. Drawing on Hulse and colleagues (2011; 2014) concept of secure occupancy, this presentation investigates how these elements impact on older lower income renters' sense of being able to assemble a home in the private rental sector (see Soita & McKee, 2019) and remain in that home, shedding light on the challenges and opportunities for improving de facto housing stability for a growing population of lifetime private renters.

The impacts of the threat of eviction or actual eviction on private renters in two Australian states

Alan Morris[1], Yiran Li[2], Joelle Moore[3], Thi Thanh Mai Giang [3]

[1]University of Technology Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[2]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

[3]The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Around one in four Australian households are reliant on the lightly regulated private rental sector for their accommodation. The light regulation means that landlords are able to increase the rent to whatever the market can tolerate and can evict tenants for little or no reason. Although precise data is not available, organisations assisting tenants have reported that not renewing leases and actual evictions in the current tight rental market are a common phenomenon. It is also argued that circumstances where a tenant is forced to move by an unaffordable rent increase, or a refusal by the landlord to do necessary repairs, should be recognised as an informal eviction, even without a termination notice from the landlord. Despite its prevalence, there has been scant research on evictions in Australia in the private rental sector. To better understand the impacts of the threat of eviction or actual eviction I draw on 53 interviews with tenants in two states, NSW and Queensland. Judith Butler's and Isabell Lorey's precarity frameworks are used to examine the consequences. Several interrelated impacts are discussed – the effects on the mental health of tenants, the financial implications, the reluctance to complain or ask for maintenance, the loss of support networks and sense of home and decline in accommodation quality.

Existing in limbo: Structural drivers of protracted displacement after the Eastern Australian Floods

Anastasia Mortimer

University of Newcastle, Newcastle, Australia

Protracted displacement following climate change-induced disasters has emerged as a significant secondary crisis in Australia. This displacement affects individuals whose homes have been damaged or destroyed, leaving them in extended periods of homelessness with few options for medium- and long-term housing recovery. This paper examines protracted displacement through the case of the 2022 Eastern Australian Floods, using qualitative interview data to show that affected populations included not only economically vulnerable groups but also middle- and high-income homeowners. These findings challenge common assumptions in disaster studies that only economically disadvantaged groups experience long-term displacement. The study highlights that structural factors—including government disaster response policies, neoliberal economic practices, and housing market pressures such as unaffordability and rising living costs—have driven displacement across socio-economic boundaries. Middle-income homeowners, facing significant financial strain, are among those impacted, indicating that home ownership alone is insufficient protection against prolonged displacement. This case study advocates for a re-evaluation of vulnerability frameworks in disaster studies. It underscores the need for context-specific models that reflect the socio-economic diversity of displacement experiences in high-income countries like Australia. Recognising these shifts in vulnerability is essential for crafting effective disaster risk reduction and climate adaptation strategies. The findings provide empirical support for expanding vulnerability research to account for the growing influence of economic and policy-driven factors on disaster-induced displacement.

Indigenous Housing Support in Australia; the lay of the land

Megan Moskos[1], Richard Benedict[2], Ryan van den Nouwelant[3]

[1]The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

[2]The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[3]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

This AHURI funded research provides for the first time a consolidated understanding of the current status of the Indigenous housing system across Australia. The research defines the arrangements for governance, regulation and, importantly, self-determination in Indigenous housing that current exist nationally and in each jurisdiction. It includes an analysis of the resources currently committed towards meeting Indigenous housing need, in relation to overall Commonwealth, State and Territory funding for new social and affordable housing. Applying a proven model (Lawson et al 2018), the research sets out where Indigenous households are currently living, by location and housing tenure, in relation to issues including affordability and overcrowding, and provides an estimation of current and future Indigenous housing need across Australia. The research identifies key issues associated with the current Indigenous housing system and policy development options to strengthen the system.

The findings are based on a detailed literature review, extensive desktop review of the current Indigenous housing system across Australia, an analysis of available housing data, a housing needs analysis and targeted stakeholder consultations. An Indigenous Advisory Committee with First Nations housing leaders from across jurisdictions informed the research methodology and key findings.

Exploring how intensification shapes residents' experiences of neighbourhood place attachment in Auckland, New Zealand.

Larissa Naismith, Robin Kearns, Laurence Murphy

The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Current policies across Australasian cities advocate for a vision of the 'compact city'. Traditionally low-density suburbs are becoming intensified through the rapid construction of medium-density housing typologies, and an influx of new residents. This process leads to complex alterations of the material, social and symbolic landscapes of neighbourhoods and re-shapes existing residents' engagements with place. While existing research has examined perceptions of intensification held by existing residents, there has been little investigation into how residents re-negotiate place attachments during these periods of intensification-related change.

This paper contributes to this gap through presenting empirical findings from three intensifying central suburbs in Auckland, New Zealand. Specifically, I reflect on the findings from semi-structured interviews and neighbourhood walks with residents living in the suburbs of Three Kings, Mount Albert, and Onehunga. These interviews reveal the implications of intensification on re-shaping residents' everyday engagements with their neighbourhood and highlight the potential disruption and re-negotiation of place attachments in the context of neighbourhood change. Furthermore, I trace shifting degrees of residents' acceptance of neighbourhood intensification and highlight residents' remaining concerns about future intensification. This study concludes that place attachment is a useful lens through which to examine neighbourhood change and gain a deeper understanding of the social outcomes of intensification.

Mortgage stress in older Australians: an analysis of antecedents and regional differences

Venkat Narayanan, Sarah Sinclair, Ashton de Silva, Sveta Angelopoulos

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Mortgage stress is a significant issue affecting many homeowners across Australia (29.5% as of August 2024 – Roy Morgan 2024) and maintaining home ownership is becoming increasingly difficult for many households. Our research explores the antecedents of mortgage stress across geographic regions in Australia with the aim of examining policy responses that may alleviate mortgage stress for vulnerable cohorts, especially those in the over 55 years of age. At present there are schemes in place for those in the over 67 age cohort and experiencing mortgage stress such as the Housing Equity Access Scheme (HEAS), which can be used in some cases to help these cohorts maintain home ownership. Remaining in their homes and thus enabling ageing in place is a desirable outcome for this cohort (Pani-Harreman KE 2021). While schemes such as the HEAS are useful, there is a further cohort of those experiencing mortgage stress that need comparable support i.e. financially struggling households in the 55-66 year old cohort, and the options available to them as well as antecedent factors leading to mortgage stress are not well understood. The size of this cohort is growing, playing a vital role in our society and their requirements and activities will shape our future, therefore supporting them to remain in their own home is a financial challenge that will deliver community benefit. This is particularly important at a time when regional differences and variability in house prices is becoming significant.

The research draws on publicly available data from the ABS, and housing data from AHURI. Statistical analysis of differences across regions and antecedents to mortgage stress. Academic and grey literature will be used to explore policy options that can be made available to the 55-66 year old cohort. The paper aims to provide a comprehensive review of policy options to support this cohort in retaining their homes, given the longer terms benefits of ageing in place and the short-term reduction in possible homelessness.

Reference:

Pani-Harreman KE, Bours GJJW, Zander I, Kempen GIJM, van Duren JMA (2021) “Definitions, key themes and aspects of ‘ageing in place’: a scoping review”. *Ageing and Society* 41(9):2026-2059. DOI:10.1017/S0144686X20000094.

Migrant housing precarity: coping mechanisms and the role of support networks and organisations

Zahra Nasreen[1], Kristian Ruming[2]

[1] The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[2]Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Australia welcomes a substantial number of migrants annually; however, policy remains disconnected from their housing needs. An increasing number of migrants live in precarious situations that jeopardise their health, safety, relationships and overall well-being. The shift towards neoliberal policies has further led to a fragmentation of state responsibilities, with growing reliance on alternative support networks like digital community groups, not-for-profit organisations, and NGOs to fill the gaps. While these networks provide essential services - ranging from housing advice to legal aid and emotional support - their roles in addressing the housing challenges faced by migrants remain underexplored. This paper draws on qualitative data from interviews with key stakeholders (n=14) from migrant support organisations in Sydney in 2023. The paper evaluates the efforts, contributions and limitations of these organisations.

The findings identify strengths and gaps in both informal networks (friends, family, community groups) and formal support systems (NGOs, support programs, advocacy organisations). While support networks and services are crucial, they are insufficient in addressing the full scope of migrant housing precarity, particularly when it comes to groups who face the greatest vulnerabilities and excluded from support benefits such as asylum seekers and international students. Moreover, broader systemic issues, such as the lack of affordable housing supply, limit the impact these support organisations have on improving migrant housing outcomes. Nonetheless, many organisations go above and beyond to support migrants and advocate for their housing needs and settlement challenges. These efforts create opportunities for collaboration not only among support organisations but also with researchers in this area. The paper contributes to understanding the gap areas where policy intervention or recognition is needed to better leverage the role and effectiveness of these alternative support channels.

Undertaking interviews with formerly homeless young people – a qualitative protocol to enhance rigour safety

Kimberley O'Sullivan[1], Mary Buchanan[1], Brodie Fraser[1], Lori Leigh[1], Rachel Dohig[1], Tīria Pehi[1], Matt Jenkins[1], Linda Ryan[2], Nevil Pierse[1]

[1]University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

[2]Takiri Mai te Ata Homelessness Prevention Services, Kokiri Marae Keriana Olsen Trust

Housing and health research frequently requires the collection of qualitative data that is sensitive in nature, both from participants who might be in a position of vulnerability, and/or in settings or subject matter that may cause distress to researchers involved. While there is a wide body of literature discussing the theory and methods of different qualitative research approaches to data collection and analysis, the discussion of practical steps to ensure researchers remain physically and psychologically safe is more limited. We present a protocol developed through working with our community research partners for undertaking interviews with formerly homeless young people who have experienced homelessness during childhood. The goal of the project is to suggested evidence-based changes to create a child-focussed, strengths-based, and mana-enhancing housing support system that provides the best housing environment for children and young people. Our protocol is designed to ensure both interviewer and interviewee safety, as well as managing the complexity of multiple interviewers. In providing this detailed account of our methods protocol, we aim to contribute to the development of a literature around enhancing researcher and participant safety when undertaking sensitive qualitative public health research.

Can not-for-profit electricity retail reduce energy poverty and improve wellbeing? A case study of Toast Electric in Greater Wellington

Kimberley O'Sullivan[1], Rachel Dohig[1], Rosalie Watt[1] (presenter), Mary Buchanan[1], Tiria Pehi[1], Philip Squire[2]

[1]University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

[2]Toast Electric, New Zealand

Energy poverty affects around 30% of New Zealanders, largely driven by our poor-quality housing and rising residential energy prices. Toast Electric is a market-based intervention aimed at alleviating energy poverty through non-profit electricity retail by supporting eligible low-income customers referred to the Energy Wellbeing programme by their partner agencies providing budgeting advice. Toast Electric was developed by the Sustainability Trust, an NGO which has a long history of providing home energy efficiency assessments, energy advice, and installation of energy efficiency measures to improve housing conditions and sustainability in the Greater Wellington region. Customers in the Toast Electric Energy Wellbeing programme are provided with discounted electricity during the winter months, subsidised by general-income customers. Energy Wellbeing Customers are also offered energy education and shallow-retrofit interventions that Sustainability Trust currently provides or refers clients to, including the Well Homes Healthy Home Intervention (if eligible) and a compliance check with the Healthy Homes Standards. We present an evaluation of the wellbeing impacts of Toast Electric's Energy Wellbeing Programme, conducted in consultation with Toast Electric and the referral partners. Results from interviews with Energy Wellbeing customers and referral partners, and a qualitative survey of regular customers, will be presented, demonstrating how Toast Electric's Energy Wellbeing Programme helps to support wellbeing.

The changing landscape of low cost Boarding Houses in Inner Sydney: Perspectives on Health, Social, and Business Challenges

Jude Page, Paul Clenaghan

Sydney Local Health District, Sydney, Australia

This study examines the experiences of owners and managers of low-cost boarding houses within Inner Sydney, where the majority of New South Wales' boarding houses are located. Boarding houses offer affordable, accommodation for individuals who face challenges in securing mainstream rental accommodation.

Interviews with sixteen owners and three managers of traditional boarding houses (with 10 or more rooms, charging less than $270 per week) highlighted the role low cost boarding houses play in housing disadvantaged populations. These often aging and poor-quality buildings offer living conditions that may not be conducive to good health.

The number of these lowest rental traditional boarding houses are declining, as many owners plan to sell the asset or repurpose their properties to cater to higher-cost student or new generation boarding houses. New generation boarding houses offer better financial returns, better living environments, align with safety regulations but come with much higher rents. The reduction in boarding houses reduces the most affordable housing options for vulnerable populations. Many residents lack financial means to seek alternative accommodation.

Some residents experience multiple vulnerabilities, including health challenges and social isolation, which can be exacerbated by the living environment. As residents age, limited mobility and declining physical and cognitive health raise health and safety concerns. This study highlights a gap in accessible affordable and supportive housing models that better address the health and social needs of this vulnerable population.

Operationalizing Justice for Accessible Urban Heat Resilience Resources

Amir Hossein Pakizeh, Nader Naderpajouh

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Urban resilience strategies inherently involve the distribution of resources, which intersects with concerns of inequality and justice. This study employs a pluralistic approach to justice to scrutinize how different interpretations of distributional justice theories shape the implementation of urban heat resilience strategies. We focus our analysis on the urban microclimate of Greater Sydney, Australia, specifically examining the distribution of tree canopies—a critical yet unequally distributed resource that influences urban livability. Our findings reveal that increases in tree canopy coverage, while beneficial in some areas, may paradoxically deepen existing injustices by perpetuating unequal exposure to urban heat. This injustice is highlighted by our analysis, which shows that the granularity of data and adjustments in spatial scale can reveal and sometimes exacerbate deviations from justice. Through this study, we underscore the necessity of integrating justice considerations into urban planning to ensure that resilience strategies not only mitigate heat risks but also promote justice across all communities. By exploring how justice theories are applied in urban resilience planning, we call for policies that rigorously address both the structural drivers of vulnerability and the diverse needs within urban populations.

Not moving on: understanding the place of evictions after 'no grounds' reform

Leo Patterson Ross, Jack Moon

Tenants' Union of NSW, Sydney, Australia

Forthcoming tenancy law reforms in New South Wales, which aim to replace "no grounds" evictions with "reasonable grounds" evictions, are a significant step to increase tenant protections. On their own, they may not significantly change the rate of eviction but instead increase the transparency of evictions which has significant positive impact on the experience of renting.

Current data from the NSW Civil and Administrative Tribunal illustrates a troubling trend: evictions, primarily for rent arrears, reflect societal views that position renters as making less legitimate 'homes' than owner-occupiers. This paper critically examines the approach to rental default, comparing the treatment of renters to responses to defaults in other financial domains such as mortgages and utility bills. While other sectors increasingly acknowledge late payments as a sign of broader economic hardship deserving of support, rental legislation remains focused on punitive measures. By exploring this ideological divide, the study highlights how deeply rooted perceptions of property ownership contribute to inequities that make tenants more vulnerable to displacement and economic precarity and suggests next steps in improving stability of tenure for renters.

Evaluating the current food environment in 8 transport hubs identified in NSW Transport Oriented Development Program

Milijana Pavlicevic, Dorathy Yuen, Stephanie Partridge, Sisi Jia, Alice Gibson

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Aim: To evaluate the current food environments of eight transport hubs identified by NSW Transport Oriented Development Program. The program was developed to increase housing surrounding 39 transport hubs. Part 1 of the program involves state-led rezonings within 1,200m radius of eight transport hubs. The plan has potential to impact millions of residents' livelihoods. However, the plan has not considered food environments, which would determine where residents will eat and shop for their food.

Methods: Google My Maps was used to identify food outlets within 1,200m radius for each transport hub. Food outlets were categorised using Food Environment Health Score framework. Descriptive statistics were used for this study. Demographic data, including population density, household composition, vehicle ownership, median weekly incomes and rent, were compared to contextualise findings.

Results: Crow Nest had the highest number of food outlets (n=254). Unhealthy and less healthy food outlets were more prevalent than healthy food outlets for all transport hubs, particularly in Bella Vista and Kellyville. The most prevalent food outlet type was restaurants/cafes (50%). Across all transport hubs, 65% of food outlets identified offered delivery services. Popular delivery platforms included Uber Eats, Menulog and DoorDash. Among the 644 food outlets with price information provided, 46.2% were inexpensive, 50.2% were moderately priced and 4.3% were expensive.

Conclusion: High ratio of unhealthy to healthy food outlets (n=1.63-5.67) were observed across all transport hubs. Food environment should be considered in city planning. More healthy food outlets should be constructed for increasing population in the eight accelerated precincts.

Growth without direction: the state of Australian social housing policy

Hal Pawson, Chris Martin

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

After a protracted parliamentary stoush, the federal government's flagship Housing Australia Future Fund passed into law in 2023, promising 20,000 new social rental units over five years and signalling the Commonwealth's belated return to investing in social housing construction. Moreover, since this coincides with significant post-2020 social rental investment pledged by most state/territory governments, an infusion of some 60,000 units is in prospect over the decade, potentially expanding the sector by around 11%.

After more than a decade of minimal construction activity in most parts of Australia this is undeniably a remarkable policy reversal that might even be interpreted as heralding a decisive turning point in the sector's unrelenting twenty-first century decline. In examining the plausibility of this analysis, our paper begins by analysing the investment commitments mentioned above, and the policymaking landscape from whence they came.

We then proceed to address the question 'if Australian governments were genuinely committed to social rental sector revival, and to the long-term capital funding necessary to achieve that, what institutional reforms would be also required?' Building on the authors' earlier work (Pawson et al. 2019), we discuss the multiple ingredients that such an enterprise would need to encompass. We argue that, as well as upgraded regulation, enhanced data on sector dynamics and the rebuilding of policymaking capacity within government, this would necessarily include a clearer consumer-focused sector mission, as well as the establishment of stronger legislative underpinning for social housing operation and for housing assistance more generally.

Improving coordination of data and actors for disaster-responsive housing and safer communities

Francesca Perugia, Courtney Babb, Rebecca Scherini

Curtin University, Perth, Australia

Research investigating disaster risk associated with natural hazard exposure and housing focuses primarily on the post-recovery phase (Patch 2023; Charlesworth and Fien 2023; Van den Nouwelant and Cibin 2022). Little attention has been paid to how disaster risk mitigation, housing policies, and planning and delivery of new settlements link together. Better disaster prevention measures require better knowledge, better data and information, and standard-setting coordination across actors involved and jurisdictions.

Drawing from the findings of the recently concluded AHURI project, the paper presents an overview of current data availability relevant to disaster risk assessment for the planning and delivery of new housing, including an examination of how this information is made available (i.e. format, standards, sharing tool) and examine issues and challenges relating to data availability and sharing from a stakeholder's perspective. In particular, we discuss what the respondents to our survey consider valuable information in their decision-making processes and their confidence in data quality and accessibility. This provides context and foundation for the second part of the paper, where we discuss how and what data are used and shared across the planning and development process of new housing in NSW, VIC, and WA to reduce the impact of disasters associated with dwellings' exposure to natural hazards. In conclusion, the paper discussed the three priority areas identified by the main actors in the development process that require addressing to improve decision-making processes.

Older women's precarious housing: the impact of economic abuse across the life course

Maree Petersen, Cheryl Tilse

University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland

In Australia, there is increased recognition that older women face disproportionate risk of living in precarious housing or homelessness. Structural factors including unaffordable private rental payments whilst reliant on the aged pension, the lack of social housing, and the lack of security of tenure are dominant causes. However, this does not help us understand why older women from both low socio-economic and more advantaged backgrounds come to be precariously housed.

A dominant finding from our program of research on the life course of older renters is women's history of economic abuse during marriage and after separation. Our research suggests rather than divorce per se, it is economic abuse that limits opportunity for women to recover financially resulting in continued disadvantage over their life course. This presentation takes a life course approach to understand the culminative effects of economic abuse that results in women being precariously housed in later life. Our program of research conducted 106 life history interviews with older people experiencing housing precarity. This presentation draws on the findings from 40 interviews with older women who experienced economic abuse.

We identify the practices and impact of economic abuse. For some women their marriage was characterised by violence, coercive control and economic abuse; for others the economic abuse began just prior to separation. Importantly, both groups of women continued to experience economic abuse after separation. The prolonged nature of the economic abuse had both an immediate and long-term detrimental effect on women's finances and housing resources. As well as the abusive practices of partners and former partners we consider the practices of financial and legal institutions. Understanding and addressing economic abuse can assist women's housing security in later life.

Does Your Generation Influence Your Housing Outcomes? Disentangling Age-Period-Cohort Effects in Australia and the UK

Christopher Phelps, Rachel Ong ViforJ

Curtin University, Perth, Australia

In media and public commentary, generations are often cited as a key determinant of housing outcomes – such as the notion that the 'Smashed Avo Generation' or 'Generation Me' is too fiscally undisciplined to achieve home ownership. However, research on housing outcomes typically focuses on age and period characteristics – comparing young versus old or early versus late periods – while often overlooking generational birth cohorts due to methodological or data limitations, or by confounding cohort effects with age-based differences. In this paper, we employ current techniques to address these limitations in age-period-cohort (APC) analysis and disentangle their effects on housing outcomes and savings behaviour in Australia and the UK over the past two decades.

Systematic outcomes from housing a homeless cohort in Hamilton, New Zealand

Nevil Pierse[1], Jenny Ombler[1], Terence Jiang[1], Brodie Fraser[1], Julie Nelson[2], Carole McMinn[2], Kerry Hawkes[2], Polly-Atatoa-Carr[3], Tiria Pehi[1], Clare Aspinall[1], Sarah Bierre[1], Kate Schick[1], Philippa Howden-Chapman[1]

[1] University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

[2] The People's Project, New Zealand

[3] University of Waiakto, Hamilton, New Zealand

Homelessness is a worldwide and growing problem. Homelessness is also a systematic failure by society to meet the needs of vulnerable people. This group are however often described as "Hard to Reach" and the focus is on the individual rather than systematic failures. In this collaboration with "The Peoples Project", we examine the histories and outcomes for a cohort of 397 people who were housed using a Housing First model of permanent, sustainable and wrap-around support.

We show that this group have a very high number of touchpoints with government relative to the general population, overall over 200,000 interactions are recorded before the people are housed. Comparing the rate of service usage in the year before being housed to the 5th year after been housed shows a 64% decline in mental health usage, a 44% decline in hospitalisations, a 36% reduction in police offences and a 138% increase in income from wages.

Our results show how Housing First in New Zealand improves people's wellbeing. A systems-wide approach is required to ensure that Housing First and other similar housing and social support programmes have maximum benefit, whilst simultaneously stemming the entry of people into homelessness. Additionally, the welfare system requires improvement and coordination to ensure that people are able to afford housing while on welfare.

The changing geographies of Transport Oriented Development: assembling land, assembling people

Simon Pinnegar, Charlie Gillon

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

The 'accelerated' Tier 1 Transport Oriented Development (TOD) precincts announced by the NSW Government in late 2023 capture the evolving context – and ever-deepening complexity – of urban redevelopment in the Australian city. Market-led residential densification, leveraging transport infrastructure investment, recasts and extends the redevelopment geographies of the compact city beyond traditional 'brownfield' and 'state significant' sites to existing homes, streets and communities which radiate from newly designated transit nodes. Circles around stations have been drawn, rezoning provisions put forward, and planning protocols fast-tracked and streamlined. In this paper, we hone our focus on the draft structure plans for the conjoined Kellyville-Bella Vista TOD precinct (DPHI, 2024) and subsequent debate which has ensued. We place a particular spotlight on envisaged futures for the (currently) low density neighbourhoods of Glenwood and Stanhope Gardens to the west of Old Windsor Road, where over 85% of the potential additional housing supply attributed to TOD provisions is to be delivered. In reconfiguring these estates, the need to amalgamate lots for land assembly comes sharply into focus, as do the interests and expectations of the myriad existing homeowners whose properties are central to the planning aims and development trajectories shaping the future of their neighbourhoods. Drawing upon recently completed case study research investigating residential collective sales along the Sydney Metro Northwest line, we unpack the complexities tied to delivering densification in practice. Between initial strategic intent and delivery of outcomes on the ground are the property interests, concerns, behaviours and diverse circumstances of individual households, negotiated through bottom-up collective governance arrangements as neighbours work together to secure an assembly dividend through selling ‘in one line’. Insights reiterate and reinforce that renewal is an intensely peopled – and often lengthy – process, and point towards the need for more active, ongoing policy interest in these crucial metropolitan spaces, and their communities, as redevelopment unfolds.

Disability, place and home: experiences of social housing tenants with disability and chronic illness under tenure and welfare residualisation

Mel Powersmith

University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland

The social housing sector plays a crucial role in housing people with disabilities and is increasingly targeted towards those in the 'highest need'. Disinvestment and residualisation have relegated the sector to 'last resort' status, thereby reducing housing stock and quality while increasing demand and the stigmatisation of social housing tenants. A changing tenant profile means that people from complex life circumstances may reside in proximity, leading to tensions and the interruption of routine domestic activities.

This paper draws on doctoral research with 37 social housing tenants, the majority of whom have a disability or chronic health condition. It explores two aspects of tenants' experiences of disability and home in the social housing sector. The first is the way tenants' residential environments (dwelling and surrounds) help improve or serve to exacerbate health conditions. Social housing affords some tenants autonomy, which was denied to some participants in their previous housing. Some dwellings are suited to or modified for people's needs or enable tenants to care for relatives with disability or health concerns. However, in some instances, a stressful residential environment or poor design can cause harm or compound existing mental and/or physical ill health. The second area of inquiry relates to tenants' experiences of the housing and health systems and the way they intersect to support or inhibit tenants' sense of autonomy and wellbeing. These include various aspects of the health system and the National Disability Insurance Scheme. The paper highlights how tenants engage in homemaking and self-advocacy while simultaneously experiencing chronic health conditions that potentially erode their autonomy.

Timing is of the essence: Structures of provision versus planning in the apartment supply process

Bill Randolph[1], Dr Laurence Troy[2], Reg Wade[1], Alistair Sisson[3], Simon Pinnegar[1]

[1] University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

[2] The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[3] Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

The planning process has come under sustained criticism in recent years as a major impediment to housing supply. Australian governments at Federal and State levels are actively pursuing policies aimed at 'speeding up' the planning process as the solution to the current housing supply crisis. Much of this is planned to be delivered through high density apartment development around mass transit infrastructure.

But to what extent does the planning approval process actually contribute to the time it takes to deliver housing? And how much of the time taken to deliver housing lies beyond the planning approval process but results from the structural conditions that determine the process of extracting value from the land development process itself?

This paper explores this issue through the findings of a large-scale analysis of the developmental timelines of apartments built during the 'boom' decade between 2012 and 2019 in Sydney supported by 30 key stakeholder interviews. We find that the apartment development process became more complex as schemes grew in size, taking more time to both plan for and deliver, with developers becoming adept at 'gaming' the approval process to maximise site yields, closely managing marketing periods and scheme staging to take best advantage of the market cycle, greater involvement of lenders in shaping developer behaviour and supply limitations that resulted from the cyclical 'boom-bust' market cycle itself. Moreover, the actual timeline taken by the development approval process accounted for only a fraction of the total development timelines and varied relatively little regardless of scheme size or price point.

We conclude that planning is important as the 'switch' that turns on the development opportunity, but is nevertheless only one part of a large machinery of development that involves land owners, developers, contractors, global supply chains, financiers, and speculative purchasers all competing for a slice of the value being generated. There are any number of time-lengthening barriers to completing projects, and gaining planning approval does not appear to be the major time hurdle, accounting for a fraction of the overall project timeline.

Navigating trust and truth: Embedding low carbon retrofit in Australian home improvements

Sarah Robertson, Ralph Horne, Trivess Moore, Nicola Willand, Bhavna Middha

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Up to 80% of Australian homes were built before the introduction of minimum thermal performance standards. This existing housing requires significant energy and thermal retrofits upgrades to deliver health, wellbeing, affordability and decarbonisation. Trust is increasingly understood as an important driver of what, why and how households make improvements to their homes, and whether low carbon retrofits are achieved. However, beyond establishing the importance of trust, there is little research that explores the nuance of how trust informs retrofit practices and outcomes across households and industry. This paper explores this research gap and draws on interviews and focus groups with over 150 households and 50 retrofit stakeholders (including industry, government and third sector stakeholders) in Victoria (in Melbourne and Latrobe Valley) and South Australia (in Adelaide and Mt Gambier). Drawing on theories of social practice and the capabilities to retrofit the research found that retrofit is largely invisible in homemaking practices: not an integral part of homemaking discourses, meanings and competencies; and that when it is part of shared meanings, it is affected by asymmetric or biased information. The lack of clear, full, independent information is coupled with a lack of general and shared understanding about appropriate standards for warm/cool, low carbon and affordable homes. This is linked to considerations of trust and truth, both across households and wider networks, and across the retrofit industry. Without opportunities for validating information households find themselves self-evaluating sources of truth and often prioritise a known connection or relationship over an unfamiliar source. Within the retrofit industry trust and truth is used to suit different narratives and business models potentially resulting in sub-optimal retrofit outcomes. Based upon the findings and deeper understanding of the nuance around trust and truth we suggest systemic changes to shape interventions to guide retrofit at scale.

What role does ESG play in determining developer strategy? The case of Australia

Julian Roche, Steven Rowley, Amity James

Curtin University, Perth, Australia

The real estate development industry in Australia has been a global leader in recognising the importance of ESG concerns for industry stakeholders. Australian developers have adopted multiple ESG reporting criteria across all three dimensions in response. But the role of ESG in developer strategy has not yet been explored. Employing a definition of strategy drawn indirectly from the corporate strategy literature, the aim of the article is to explain this role through a process of engagement with both Australian real estate developers themselves and the literature they produce, Working especially through the requirements of funders, the evidence shows that although ESG has now become pervasive in its influence, Its influence has not been felt equally across the different dimensions of developer strategy in Australia. It has been instrumental in driving changes in sectoral preferences. It has also inclined developers towards innovative methods of construction and development design. And it also exercised a reciprocal sway over funding choices. Other elements of strategy, however, including land banking, the extent of develop-and-hold and the choice of jurisdiction, have been much less susceptible to the rise of ESG as a driver of developer strategy.

Stories of estate renewal, the role of the media in estate renewal narratives

Dallas Rogers[1], Liam Davies[2]

[1] The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[2] RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Most people find out about public housing estate renewals through the media. In some cases even the tenants themselves find out that they will be forced to relocate via a news story. We analysed newspaper coverage of estate renewals across Australia between 2000 and 2022 to understand how they are portrayed. We also spoke with journalists to understand the factors which shape their reporting. This paper presents the findings from this research. It finds that the media portrayal of public housing residents and estates has a significant impact on public understanding of relocation. Often this involves negative portrayal of public housing, either inadequacy of dwellings or stigmatising residents, as justification for estate renewal. There is also a cycle to media reporting, with most news stories occurs early in a renewal project around announcement and then tails off. Tenants are also often omitted from the narrative later in the renewal project. This is important to understand because accurate media reporting is critical to an open and honest debate about the future of Australia's public housing estates.

Housing conditions and affordability - new evidence from the Australian Housing Conditions Dataset

Steven Rowley[1], Emma Baker[2], Lyrian Daniel[3], Claire Morey[2]

[1] Curtin University, Perth, Australia

[2] The University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia

[3] University of South Australia, Adelaide, Australia

Now in its fourth wave of data collection, the Australian Housing Conditions Dataset (AHCD) is a representative sample of over 22,000 Australian households. The survey collects data on housing conditions, affordability, security and dwelling satisfaction, informing policy development across housing tenures. In this presentation we will discuss the latest results of the survey, conducted in late 2024, examining how responses have changed across the 8 years since the first wave and the implications for policy makers. Examining spatial and gender trends, the presentation will analyse key differences and discuss the potential for future use of the data-set by academics, industry and government.

Selling together: the calculative practices of resident collective sales

Kristian Ruming[1], Laura Crommelin[2], Simon Pinnegar[2], Hazel Easthope[2], Sha Liu[1], Charlie Gillon[2]

[1] Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

[2] University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

There is an established literature on the calculative practices used in property and development. Here, calculative practice often refers to the models and equations used by finance and property actors. Four broad types of calculations have been identified. First, development feasibility undertaken by development actors to assess project profit. Second, investment feasibilities where financial actors assess the level of risk or returns from property against other asset classes. Third, property valuation, especially related to equity and access to debt finance. Fourth, planning feasibilities where planning agencies use models/equations to assess the capacity to include non-commercial components, typically affordable housing, in developments.

Less attention has been paid to how property owners calculate the value of their property, especially in the context of changing planning and market conditions. This paper helps fills this gap by exploring the calculative practices of homeowners in four development precincts in Sydney, Australia. These precincts have experienced land use zoning changes, transforming areas of suburban detached dwellings into sites of high-density development. As a result, groups of residents have come together to pursue collective sales (also known as land assemblies), where neighbours agree to sell their property together. However, in this context, there is little guidance or established basis for owners on property values as the changing planning framework and potential for collective sales separates these locations from surrounding property markets. Nevertheless, residents are still required to calculate property values and agree on sales price. We explore four types of calculative practices undertaken by owners: comparisons; expert advice; property value calculations; and distribution of sales price calculations.

Time is money: Understanding the duration of stages in the apartment development process

Andrea Sharam[1], Lyndall Bryant[2]

[1] RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

[2]The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

This paper explores the length of time the key stages in the apartment development process take in Melbourne, Australia. Development time is a very significant factor for profitability which in turn impacts supply. In the Australian context planning approval time has long been argued to be excessive with delay often linked to declining housing affordability and housing supply shortages. Since the COVID disruption to supply chains and labour markets construction time has assumed greater prominence. However, the phase between planning approval and construction commencement has attracted little attention. This is the period in which the developer must obtain presales to satisfy financiers of market demand and cover the loan amount. It is also the time in which design must be completed for the building permit approval. Despite intense interest in some stages there is limited evidence on how long development is taking and the contribution of each stage. Understanding the contribution of each stage to project duration has ramifications for policy prescriptions aimed at reducing development cost and time.

Using a sample of 39 apartment projects started and completed between 2012 and 2023, which takes in a boom and bust property cycle, we examine four milestones in the development process: submission of planning application, grant of planning approval, construction commencement, and project completion to determine and compare the duration of each stage. We also examine the impact of project size on overall completion time and stage duration. The findings suggest the duration of each stage and overall time is highly variable. In addition to enumerating planning approval and construction time, the research highlights the very considerable impact of the presales/building permit phase on project time.

There is no such thing as 'the strata': understanding what strata title means for housing supply, affordability and liveability

Cathy Sherry

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Strata title governs high and low rise housing, along with mixed use development. Legislation and private by-laws determine the ongoing costs of strata housing, as well as its use and livability. Strata title is the almost exclusive focus of governments seeking to solve the affordability crisis through supply, thus it is imperative that planners, architects, landscapers, designers, local councils and state governments all account for the implications of strata title for owners, tenants, community housing providers and society.

This paper will explore four key aspects of strata title. First it will consider how strata title imposes on-going costs on owners in ways that are prohibited in traditional housing. While expenses are shared, complex infrastructure, including sustainability infrastructure, creates costs which can be unaffordable, even when split. Second, medium to large scale developments, incentivised by governments, cannot be managed by lay owners, creating the need for expensive, frequently exploitative professional services. Third, local councils enter planning agreements which superficially seem to impose infrastructure costs on developers, while, in reality, they impose costs on owners, and privatise traditionally public infrastructure and space. Fourth, in mixed use developments in NSW, Qld and Victoria, developers use stratum/volumetric subdivision, a little understood title designed to avoid the consumer protection provisions in strata title legislation. Owners will find themselves subject to extensive on-going costs for sustainability infrastructure and public open space, but with no power to control or alter those costs.

While Australians frequently refer to ‘the strata’ as the entity that is responsible for costs and management of medium to high density housing, no such entity exists. Legislation imposes the responsibility for costs and management on owners who are often unwilling, unable and unaware of the burden their housing entails. All professionals and governments engaged in planning, designing and delivering medium to high density housing need to understand the strata title ‘burden’ and minimize its impacts on owners and tenants. Insufficient consideration of strata title in policy and planning is deepening housing inequality, with a growing portion of Australians - typically younger, older and/or migrants - bearing substantial on-going housing costs that those in traditional, non-strata housing will never face.

Spatial analysis of the proposed locations of the TOD reforms in relation to climatic factors and natural disasters

Sara Shirowzhan, Min-Chun Aczel, Fauzia Shaikh, Masih Azimi, Swarnima Pagdaloo, Emily Williams

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

The current housing crisis in New South Wales (NSW) and specifically Greater Sydney has forced the NSW state government to implement drastic measures to create more infill housing and also not contribute to more urban sprawl. The introduction of the Transit-oriented Development State Environmental Plan (TOD SEPP), which focuses on creating mixed-use high-density precincts within a 400-metre radii of 37 train and metro stations in Sydney, Wollongong, Central Coast, Lake Macquarie and Newcastle regions as well as the yet to be implemented Low-mid Rise Housing reforms, focusing on low to medium density housing within an 800-metre radii of transit and commercial hubs is aimed at creating much needed housing.

These sudden changes to the affected areas could have environmental implications, which may not have been considered in detail by the state government. The implications include not correctly factoring in the impact of floods and bushfires, which are missing from the government documents as well as the impact of such large-scale planning reforms and urban development initiatives on threatened and endangered species, and removal of tree canopy and other vegetation, which could also lead to areas more prone to heat island effect and heat vulnerability.

This research presents an analysis of the 37 TOD precincts that are affected by the climactic factors and natural disasters. The results could help inform decision-makers to re-evaluate the precincts in the light of these findings.

Do Short-Term Rental Caps Work? Evidence from Regional New South Wales

Thomas Sigler, Zhenpeng Zou, Jonathan Corcoran, Alicia Rambaldi, Elin Charles-Edwards

The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Short-term rental accommodation (STRA) booked using platforms such as Airbnb has caused significant disruption to housing markets. A persistent theme within research on STRA is the impact such accommodation has on the availability and price of long-term rental stock. Policymakers have struggled to 'rightsize' policy to manage these concerns against those of communities benefitting from visitation tied to STRA either directly or indirectly. This presentation analyses the impacts of New South Wales' 180-night STRA caps, which were implemented in 2021 and 2022 in an attempt to curb the conversion of dwellings into STRA. Based on the results of a difference-in-difference analysis, findings indicate that caps were largely ineffective in delivering more affordable housing. This leads to questions around the effectiveness of caps, including whether even tighter nightly limits may be effective, or whether other policy tools may be better suited in the Australian context.

Manufactured Home Owners: An Analysis of Lived Experiences and Sector-Specific Challenges - A Victorian Case Study

Sarah Sinclair, Ashton de Silva, Jonathan Boymal, Sveta Angelopoulos

RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Manufactured housing in Australia has grown as an affordable option for retirees, aligning with older Australians' shift toward manageable, cost-effective housing (Towart & Ruming 2022) However, homeowners in this sector often face difficulties in a fragmented regulatory environment. Many residents, primarily retirees, experience financial strain due to restrictive contract terms, high fees, and limited protections under current state laws. Since these homeowners lease the land, they cannot access home equity through reverse mortgages, depriving them of potential financial support to manage unexpected expenses or secure their future. This lack of financial flexibility worsens the precarious situations of many residents, as they cannot leverage their home's value.

This paper presents findings from a collaboration between the Manufactured Homeowners Association of Victoria (MHOA) and RMIT, investigating the unique challenges faced by manufactured homeowners in regional Victoria. Using a case study approach, the project documents MHOA members' lived experiences, highlighting systemic vulnerabilities and identifying necessary policy reforms to protect this demographic. The methodology includes analysing survey data from MHOA members and comparing regulatory frameworks in other jurisdictions that may better support manufactured homeowners.

Preliminary investigations suggest that non-uniform contracts, high exit fees, and financial restrictions can impact residents' economic security and quality of life, indicating a need for clearer, more protective regulations and flexible financial products to enable residents to access home equity, reducing housing precarity. This study provides a comprehensive understanding of sector challenges and advocates for targeted reforms addressing the financial and legal needs of this growing demographic.

Maximising social housing supply through estate renewal: a time-sensitive approach

Alistair Sisson[1], Liam Davies[2], Kristian Ruming[1], David Kelly[2]

[1] Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

[2] RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

Australian governments are increasingly promoting the redevelopment of public housing estates as projects that address the chronic lack of social housing. Building on the authors' previous research (Sisson & Ruming, 2024), this paper examines the social housing supply outcomes of a series of estate renewal projects in Sydney and Melbourne, using a methodology that accounts for the reduction in supply caused by tenant relocations and dwelling demolitions. This time-sensitive approach estimates the number of nights of accommodation lost before the construction of new and additional stock is complete, and the time taken by this additional stock to 'pay back' the accumulated supply deficit. After examining the outcomes of a series of existing projects, the paper models alternative approaches that could improve social housing supply in these terms.

Reference:

Sisson, A., & Ruming, K. (2024). Calculating the system-wide supply impacts of social housing estate renewal: New measures and methods. Housing Studies, [e-pub ahead of print], 1–25. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673037.2024.2378852

Australia's Generations of Financialised Capitalism: Tracing experiences of changing social policies and labour markets since the 1990s

Ben Spies-Butcher, Adam Stebbing

Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia

Concerns over emerging generational inequalities, marked by insecure labour markets and expensive housing, parallel conceptual interest in 'financialised capitalism' and the 'asset economy'. We map how the shift in policy frameworks to emphasise asset accumulation, debt relations and liquidity may foster increasingly distinctive 'generational' experiences that mark generations out as a more significant sociological concept. Our aim is to understand how the labour market, social policy and housing markets impact different birth cohorts who have come of age since the 1990s. We consider how we might trace collective experiences that accumulate advantages or disadvantages, such as entering labour markets during recession, undertaking education as fees rise or entering expensive housing markets. We hypothesise that the neoliberal focus on being an 'entrepreneur of the self' encourages policy settings and economic structures that make macroeconomic events more significant to generational life chances, and that destabilise 'age effects' that underpin many conventional social policies designed to manage the social risks of a 'standard' life course. Against this, we explore how financialised social policies also exaggerate inequalities within each successive generation.

Redefining the landscape of housing policy: the role of the Bank of England and regulators as architects of housing policy

Mark Stephens

University of Glasgow, Glasgow, Scotland

The rise of independent central banks and financial prudential bodies have created a dynamic in housing system change that has been neglected in mainstream housing policy debate. The role of central banks means that "housing policy" remains a function of government, but not always of elected government, and that policies that affect housing outcomes are not necessarily conceived with housing objectives in mind. Using the Bank of England as a case study this paper explores the way in which its monetary and prudential regulation policies have redefined the landscape of housing policy, and in particular the way in which it has affected the intertwined relationship between homeownership and market renting. If the hypothesis that the actions of the Bank amount to an "accidental" housing policy is supported, then questions arise as to whether and how central bank and regulatory governance should change.

“There's the pipe dream, and then there's what's realistic": Young people's aspirations and experiences in a housing crisis

Wendy Stone, Sal Clark, Zoë Goodall, Catherine Harthung

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Declining housing security for young people aged 18-30 has been apparent since the 1990s in Australia and internationally. Increasingly unequal housing opportunities are shaped by factors including familial wealth and support, education and employment and gender. Existing evidence indicates that housing precarity among young people has detrimental short-term and lifetime effects. Framed by a ‘housing aspirations’ approach, this paper presents findings of a YWCA funded qualitative study exploring the housing and living arrangements, housing aspirations, and unmet housing aspirations among young people aged 18-30 years living in Australia. The study includes participants living in marginal, rental and ownership tenures, across diverse living arrangements and gender identities. Analysed on a continuum of housing security from those currently living with housing security and support, to those experiencing acute housing precarity and/or homelessness, findings highlight the breadth of housing aspirations ‘gaps’ and impacts at a generational scale irrespective of current housing security, as well as illuminating how the impacts of aspirations gaps manifest for those most precariously housed. Gendered and intersectional factors – both ‘advantageous’ and ‘disadvantageous’ - that shape young people’s experiences and their perceptions of the housing solutions needed for their generation, are explored.

‘Housing aspirations’ as concept and method for co-creating people-centred environments

Wendy Stone[1], Piret Veeroja[1], Amity James[2], Zoë Goodall[1]

[1]Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

[2]Curtin University, Perth, Australia

The concept of 'housing aspirations' has been developed in recent scholarship focused on resident perspectives about desired and necessary housing and living environments. Housing aspirations are contextually specific to social generations, geographies and population cohorts. Extending its conceptual and empirical application, this paper examines housing aspirations as a lens for citizen-centred participatory policy processes within housing and urban systems. This includes dwelling/residential design, housing assistance modes, models of housing governance, and desired urban amenities. The paper examines three case studies in which the housing aspirations concept is mobilised to guide policy-processes: (i) reimagined housing aspirations within a declining homeownership society – the case of social and private rental sectors; (ii) cohort specific aspirations –Australian First Nations people's access to the private rental sector; and (iii) life stage housing aspirations – the case of young adult and older people’s housing. The potential for expanded application of 'housing aspirations' within citizen-centred transitions is discussed.

What do our citizen scientists say about suitable housing for older Australian?

Connie Susilawati[1], Bo Xia[1], Laurie Buys[2], Kirsty Volz[1], Qing Chen[2], Martin Larbi[1], Na Xiao[1]

[1]The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

[2]Australian Catholic University (ACU), multiple campuses, Australia

Why has the Australian housing crisis also impacted older Australians? This research, part of an ARC Discovery project (DP230101313), conducts co-design workshops using citizen science approach to understand barriers older Australians face to having their dream homes. In the first workshop at Redcliffe Library in Queensland,13 citizen scientists were encouraged to reflect on how their current housing, as part of built environment in the community, supports or hinders their the daily activities. The initial findings reveal that the housing factors can be grouped as broad categories: housing cost, location, housing design, amenities within the house and housing complex (especially related to car parking and security), and neighbourhood features. Some of the participants were not happy with their current accommodation and would like to find new ones. Some of the participants are not aware of the new Queensland Development Code requirements, which include higher energy ratings and refers to the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines (which specifically address the need for no-step, accessible entries). As older Australians spend most of their time in their own home, it is essential to involve them in the co-design of suitable and comfortable living spaces so that they can easily access the necessities and enjoy their home environment.

Housing standards and tenure security in Aotearoa New Zealand: are anti-retaliatory notice provisions enough to protect tenant complainants?

Lucy Telfar-Barnard, Sebastiaan Bierema, Rachel Dohig, Sarah Bierre

University of Otago, Wellington, New Zealand

Aotearoa New Zealand has a reasonable set of rental housing standard regulations, including the Healthy Homes Standards (HHS), and retaliatory notice is prohibited under the Residential Tenancies Act 1986 (RTA). However, enforcement of HHS or retaliatory notice provisions relies on tenants pursuing breaches through the Tenancy Tribunal. In 2021, no-cause notice was removed as an option for landlords to legally end a tenancy, but that change is expected to be reversed in early 2025. The Housing Minister asserts laws against retaliatory notice will protect tenants' willingness to report maintenance issues.

In this paper we explore how well RTA anti-retaliatory notice provisions currently protect private rental market tenants' ability to enforce housing standards. We reviewed one hundred 2023-2024 Tenancy Tribunal rulings in which tenants claimed retaliatory notice. Seventy-two claims mentioned maintenance issues. Thirty-seven claims were successful – 23 as retaliatory notice, and 14 as unlawful notice. In unsuccessful claims, the adjudicator most commonly preferred landlords' claims the notice was legal because the property was to be sold, extensively renovated, or occupied by family. Ten cases were dismissed because tenants filed outside the 28-day statutory limit for retaliatory eviction claims.

Our findings show tenants still experience retaliatory eviction despite its illegality. No-cause notice will return NZ tenants to significant tenure insecurity - in 2018, when no-cause notice was legal, a quarter of tenants had left their last rental at the landlord's instigation. We argue tenure insecurity disincentivizes renters from reporting housing quality issues, including breaches of HHS, due to fear of retaliatory eviction.

Our recommendations include abandoning the re-introduction of no-cause notice; introducing an automatic assumption of rent rebate if the property was let in poor condition; and amending the law so tenants can still be compensated for retaliatory notice even if the claim is filed too late to reinstate the tenancy.

Merit and the construction of 'the unhouseable' in Aotearoa's private rental sector

Jessica Terruhn[1], Francis L. Collins[2]

[1]University of Waikato, Hamilton, New Zealand

[2]The University of Auckland, Auckland, New Zealand

Taking the widely recognised growth of a precarious private rental sector in Aotearoa as a starting point, this presentation offers a critical intervention that stresses the urgent need for securing new approaches to housing that foreground housing need and formalise the right to housing. Based on interviews with property managers, we hone in on tenant selection as a key site of reproducing intersectional inequities in access to housing and to legitimise processes of exclusion that entrench housing precarity. Specifically, we draw attention to the notion of 'merit' as a central trope that property managers explicitly or implicitly pinpointed as a basis for tenant selection. While merit obfuscates structural discrimination with reference to ostensibly objective and colour-blind selection criteria, it serves to construct a segment of the population as 'unhouseable'. In doing so, merit reflects and reproduces normative understandings of housing as a privilege and reward only for those who have the right credentials and skills to be a 'good' tenant. Analysis shows that such discourses of merit are tied to an infantilisation and ultimately dehumanisation of some renters which echoes racist and (settler) colonial civilising narratives. While existing scholarship has predominantly identified social control of renters within the realm of public housing, our findings point to the need to problematise the widening of regimes of control to non-state housing actors such as landlords and property managers. This is especially pertinent at a time when increasing numbers of households – including those on low incomes – rely on the private rental sector to meet their housing needs, and unchecked exclusionary practices risk leaving greater numbers of renters vulnerable to housing precarity.

Superannuation for Housing

Peter Tulip[1], Matt Taylor[2]

[1]Centre for Independent Studies, Sydney, Australia

[2]Crawford School of Public Policy, Australian National University, Canberra, Australia

Allowing home buyers to access their superannuation would reduce credit constraints and gives home buyers more choice over how to save for their retirement. However, withdrawing superannuation balances would reduce retirement incomes and impair the compulsory superannuation system, a policy with bipartisan political support. Those problems can be avoided if superannuation is used as collateral. Either approach will boost demand for housing, which is unattractive unless accompanied by measures to increase housing supply.

Using the HILDA survey, we estimate access to super would enable the median first home buyer to increase their deposit by 78%. This could involve a large increase in the demand for housing. Alternatively, they would be able to pay the deposit on a new house 4 years earlier. Earlier purchase would lift the potential level of home-ownership by about 470,000, raising the home-ownership rate from 66% to 71%. The experience of New Zealand's KiwiSaver scheme suggests that almost all the available funds would be accessed.

Local problems need local solutions: emerging Queensland local government responses to the housing 'crisis'

Ryan van den Nouwelant[1], Andrew Clarke[1], Hal Pawson[1]; Joelle Moore[2]

[1]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

[2]The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Queensland

Some local councils around Australia have a long history of responding to local homelessness and housing problems facing vulnerable people. The current widespread housing system failures, though, are amplifying the attention of those local councils with existing policies, and generating new attention in local councils that have not previously had such a policy focus. Complicating local council attempts to address local housing system failures are extraordinarily constrained budgets, limited official remits in these policy domains, and an everchanging context of state and national government interventions with overlapping intent and impact. This paper draws on interviews and policy reviews to understand a variety of Queensland local council experiences, from Brisbane, Moreton Bay and Gladstone. It highlights not only the variety of innovative council interventions – including homelessness support systems, providing land for affordable housing and planning measures to facilitate affordable housing options – but also the common constraints and opportunities across different council contexts. The paper concludes that, in the spirit of subsidiarity, local councils are well placed to draw on local knowledge to implement effective context-responsive policies. State and national governments, as well as fulfilling their own housing and homelessness responsibilities, can support such efforts in two ways. First, better resource initiatives spearheaded by local councils, where those initiatives can help the other spheres of government achieve their aims. And second, facilitate local government knowledge sharing, to promulgate good practice across the local government sector.

Older adults at risk of non-supported housing precarity: a novel conceptual and empirical analysis

Piret Veeroja, Margaret/Maggie Reynolds, Wendy Stone

Swinburne University of Technology, Melbourne, Australia

Homeownership has traditionally been central to Australia's retirement policy, but declining home ownership rates mean more people are reaching retirement with mortgages, living in private rental housing, or relying on a constrained social housing sector. This paper examines a group identified by service providers as important and potentially growing, but which to date has remained relatively invisible. It focuses on older people experiencing housing precarity who do not qualify for or receive social housing support yet lack sufficient wealth to ensure housing stability as they age. This group faces considerable risks within the housing system including deepening and long-run housing precarity impacts.

Using data from ABS's Survey of Income and Housing (2019-20), approximately 850,000 people aged 55 years or older were enumerated in this precarious position. Among them, 54% rent from private landlord, 35% own their homes with mortgages, and 11% are in other tenures. Qualitative interviews show that systemic and individual factors contribute to their vulnerability.

To address these challenges, diverse solutions are needed, including innovations and adjustments to welfare and housing assistance policies. Examples include shared equity programs, housing cooperatives, independent living units and intergenerational living. Expanding financial access and tailoring housing design to meet older people's specific needs—such as ensuring adequate space and comfort—are also crucial steps toward fostering stability. Implications of inconsistent housing assistance eligibility criteria across states and territories, as well as the lack of support for mortgagees experiencing housing precarity in later life, are discussed.

Forecasting long-term impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on firm and residential location patterns

Akshay Vij, Ali Ardeshiri, Lynette Washington, Chris Leishman, Andrew Beer

University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia

Agglomeration is typically used to explain the benefits of cities and CBDs, but the pandemic has called into question the resilience of dense urban areas. Our research used stated preference experiments, surveys, interviews, and focus groups with up to 2970 households and 906 businesses Australia-wide in early 2023 to understand the impact of the pandemic on firm and residential location preferences. Our experiment methodology allowed us to generate robust predictions about the future behaviour of both firms and individuals, rather than rely solely on past behaviour as a predictor; this is critical in the context of the pandemic as it is essential to separate short-term impacts from long-term trends.

We find that, post-COVID-19, firms still prefer to be located in CBD areas in the largest cities due to proximity to high-quality premises, labour and markets. Our findings suggest that high levels of CBD vacancies that occurred through the pandemic due to lockdowns and other disruptions are not predicted to last, as the underlying demand for commercial real estate in CBDs is still strong.

However, residents prefer to live away from CBDs due to the better quality of life and affordability on offer. Specifically, the pandemic has increased the residential attractiveness of outer suburbs within major metropolitan areas, and regional cities that are large, coastal and in close proximity to a major metropolitan centre. Increased uptake of WfH arrangements has lowered transportation costs for workers, and increased their willingness to live further away from work.

In combination, we find that these changes in firm and residential location preferences are likely to be a suburbanising force within metropolitan centres, but they have the potential to be an agglomerating force at a regional scale, consolidating economic and population growth in and around the largest metropolitan centres.

First Home Purchase: Understanding the Attitudes and Actions of Australian Parents in Assisting their Children to Enter the Housing Market

Paul Vivian, Rachel Ong ViforJ, Amity James, Christopher Phelps

Curtin University , Perth, Western Australia

Rising property prices and interest rates in Australia are making it increasingly difficult for prospective homebuyers to enter the housing market. Whilst intergenerational wealth transfers have traditionally enabled younger generations to make their first home purchase, there is growing evidence that more buyers are relying on familial support to enable their first purchase.

However, there is little understanding of how Australian parents view their role in supporting their children into home ownership. This research seeks to understand:

1) What motivates Australian parents to assist their children to buy their first home and what stage of their children's lives they begin to think about acting or developing strategies. We will try to understand the extent to which the parents' own experience informs their approach and whether their assistance is purely altruistic or is predicated on some type of reciprocity.

2) The different strategies parents have taken or will take to support their children and what factors influence the decision-making process. Uniquely, this research will explore the extent to which parents retain an interest in the support they provide and might seek to protect the investment.

3) How parents' heritage, ethnic background and financial situation influences their attitude and their approach. Australia's rich heritage of migration, particularly from Europe and Asia enables some exploration into whether inherent differences in attitudes, are reflected in the practices of later generations following immigration.

4) How families with multiple offspring assist their children and the degree to which they consider it is important to be 'fair' and/or 'equitable'. This will also consider whether there are factors that might result in preferential treatment of certain siblings based on the birth order of the children, their gender, their relationship with their parents or the relative economic wealth of the children themselves.

Modular housing on remote sites: evaluating the long-term health, maintenance, and employment benefits of modern methods of construction for housing

Kirsty Volz, Lisa Kuiri, Sarah Briant, Tim Rose

The Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane, Australia

Delivery and maintenance of social housing in regional and remote areas of Australia present a unique series of challenges. Access to suitably qualified tradespeople and construction materials can be especially challenging and impact project delivery across time, cost, and quality. An approach for addressing these barriers is the procurement of prefabricated - specifically modular - housing. Constructing modular housing utilising modern methods of construction generally takes place off site in a factory setting, located in urban settings where there is better availability of both labour and materials, with dwellings then transported to remote sites for installation. A persistent issue with these methods has been the failure to address site-specific physical and social factors, which over time generate maintenance issues. Factors range from inappropriate material selection (for example, steel framing in highly corrosive environments) to houses that are culturally insensitive to day-to-day practices of residents. There is an identified need to provide site and context responsive, fit for purpose modular housing that can reduce ongoing costs in maintenance to landlords and improve residents' health and wellbeing.

This paper presents a case study modular home designed and constructed specifically for the Torres Strait Islands (TSI). It maps the process for delivery from co-design with community and residents to selection of low maintenance construction materials specifically for TSI. In addition, the paper presents a draft evaluation framework for measuring the long-term health, maintenance and employment benefits of the case study home, which ideally offset the higher upfront design and construction costs involved with high quality prefabricated housing.

Does public contact enhance subjective well-being in public housing? Evidence from public rental housing neighbourhoods in China

Xiaomeng Wang[1], Zhilin Liu[2], Yuhan Chen[2]

[1]Zhejiang University, Zhejiang, China

[2]Tsinghua University, Beijing, China

Poverty and segregation increase the risk of mental disabilities, and residents of public housing in poverty-concentrated neighborhoods often report lower well-being. Drawing on Jane Jacobs' social ecological perspective, scholars argue that everyday contact among neighbours in shared spaces can enhance well-being. To explore this idea, they developed the ecological network model to conceptualizes public contact through two-mode networks that indirectly link residents via spatial overlap in routine activities. However, the impact of public contact on well-being in public housing neighborhoods may differ, with some qualitative studies indicating negative experiences of contact in disadvantaged environments.

This study adopts an ecological network approach to examine the impact of public contact on the well-being of residents in public rental housing (PRH) projects in Beijing, China. PRH is a major part of China's affordable housing system, providing to low and medium-low income households. Previous studies find that PRH projects in China face challenges such as inferior locations, limited access to high quality facilities, and disadvantaged building environment.

Our primary data source is a survey of 628 renters across 14 PRH projects, conducted between November 2023 and January 2024. We measured public contact using the ecological network approach and employed regression model to examine its effects on well-being, considering both contact extensity (potential contact with more neighbours) and intensity (potential contact in multiple public spaces). We also considered the moderating effect of the perceived building environment.

Preliminary findings indicate that (1) PRH renters with a higher potential to contact neighbours in multiple public spaces tend to report lower levels of subjective well-being, and (2) this negative effect on well-being is more pronounced among renters who are dissatisfied with the neighbourhood environment.

This research contributes to the emerging literature on health and well-being in public housing. By focusing on Chinese PRH neighborhoods, this study offers practical insights for policies and planning aimed at enhancing quality of life for public housing residents.

Housing and home ownership in the im/mobility trajectories of migrant healthcare workers in Australia

Leah Williams Veazey

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Healthcare worker shortages in Australia – that is, the perceived shortfall in the number of healthcare workers needed to provide a desirable level of care now and in the future – have gained a lot of attention in media and policy circles, particularly since the COVID pandemic. There have been divided opinions about the role that migration should play in addressing this "care crisis" but more recently there has been a renewed acceptance that migrant healthcare workers constitute at least a partial solution. At the same time, the perceived impact of immigration on the availability and cost of housing (the "housing crisis") has made headlines and influenced government policy, despite the contested evidence on such a link. This paper explores the role of housing and home ownership in the im/mobility trajectories of migrant healthcare workers in Australia. Drawing on qualitative data from in-depth interviews with 40 overseas-trained doctors, nurses and allied health professionals, this paper interrogates the role of housing as a motivation for migration, how it affects these skilled migrants' sense of belonging in Australia, and their plans for onward/return migration. Grounded in a relational mobilities framework, this paper brings into focus the importance of relationships, emotions, care and community in understanding housing and migration, and also highlights the importance of taking a life course perspective to explore the significance of housing to skilled migrant health professionals in particular.

Communicating the objects and values of planning: lessons from science communication and public relations

Greta Werner

The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

Planning controls, along with the professionals and researchers who develop them, frequently face criticism not only in the corporate and social media but also from governments and statutory bodies. For instance, the NSW Productivity Commission has recently recommended overriding planning requirements for minimum apartment sizes and solar access in new dwellings. This challenging environment is recognised within university planning departments.

The field of planning is often said to suffer from an image problem. To investigate how planning values can be more effectively communicated to the public, this study examines the literature on communication, with a particular focus on science communication and public relations. While remaining cognizant of issues such as state capture and the influence of the development lobby on governments, the study identifies parallels with other fields of communication, such as climate science communication. The paper provides an overview of communication science and public relations, highlighting their potential applications in the context of raising the profile of urban and regional planning.

Are TODs and 15- and 20-minute neighbourhoods compatible? Housing and mobility trajectories for Sydney and Melbourne

Ian Woodcock[1], Dr Jan Scheurer[2], Dr Hulya Gilbert[3]

[1]The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

[2]RMIT University, Melbourne, Australia

[3]La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia

If recent policy announcements are to be believed, Sydney and Melbourne, Australia's two largest cities, appear destined for major disruptions driven by two headline policies being implemented in the third decade of the 21st century: transit-oriented development (TOD) and local living policies in the form of 15- and 20-minute neighbourhoods. These policies share complementary aims of reducing reliance on cars by creating mobility environments conducive to active and public transport. What interests us in this paper is whether they can overcome their inherently contradictory agendas: TOD seeks to cluster housing and non-residential uses around a limited number of railway stations and tram corridors; 15- and 20-minute neighbourhoods seek to provide access to daily living needs, including public transport, everywhere.

NSW TOD policy aims to accommodate 74% of the state's housing target within the former '6 Cities Region' within 45 rail station-based precincts over the next 15 years; Victoria is aiming to accommodate 23% of new dwellings projected for Greater Melbourne within 50 rail and tram-based activity centres. Both states' local living policies have the ambition that everyone should be able to live in a 15- or 20-minute neighbourhood.

Our analysis is twofold: Using SNAMUTS (Spatial Network Analysis for Multi-modal Urban Transit Systems) we seek to understand the trajectory of residential intensification relative to accessibility by public transport in Sydney and Melbourne in the last decade. We then compare this analysis with the distribution and accessibility of core non-residential uses required for 15- and 20-minute neighbourhoods (retail, open space, schools and transit stops). From these two analyses of the spatial distributions of housing and mobility, we speculate on their future trajectories under current policy settings.

Socioeconomic Housing Spillovers

Maria B. Yanotti[1], Moses Kangogo[1]; Danika Wright[2]

[1]University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania

[2]The University of Sydney, Sydney, Australia

We present a novel way to analyse transmission mechanisms across housing markets by constructing house price indexes based on the socioeconomic status (SES) of local areas. These SES house price indexes allow us to measure house price changes across different tiers of relative social advantage and disadvantage. This offers an enhanced approach for modelling housing market dynamics and the relationship between house prices and the economy, considering housing wealth effects and wealth inequalities. We apply our approach to the Australian market, where sustained growth in house prices have contributed to large accumulated wealth among homeowners while concurrently causing substantial housing affordability challenges for nonhomeowners. Our results show substantial variation in house price changes between SES areas. We use spillover modelling to show that shocks to the housing market originate from high SES areas and are transmitted to lower SES tiers. This suggests that high SES areas can be studied for price discovery. It also implies that high SES areas spread and generate house price changes in less affordable markets.

Prioritization of Enforcements against Subdivided Units in Hong Kong

Yung Yau

Lingnan University, Hong Kong, China

As a result of the acute shortage of affordable housing, subdivided units (SDUs) have been proliferating in Hong Kong. Typically, SDUs are residential flats that have been subdivided into smaller units or cubicles, often with inadequate facilities and poor living conditions. With a view to regulating SDU tenancies and provides protection to SDU tenants in various aspects, the Hong Kong government introduced statutory tenancy control on SDUs in January 2023. While this type of informal housing has been notorious for its cramped, unhygienic, and unsafe conditions, the number of SDUs and population living in SDUs keep on growing in Hong Kong. In the Policy Address 2023, the Chief Executive announced to establish a Task Force on Tackling the Issue of Subdivided Units to set the minimum standards of living conditions for SDUs and suggest measures to eradicate substandard SDUs.

Against this background, this study aims to develop a framework which contains the indicators to be considered when prioritizing SDUs for eradication. In other words, the framework is designed to evaluate and benchmark the "quality" of SDUs in Hong Kong. To achieve this aim, a set of indicators were selected based on literature review and expert opinions. The indicators were then grouped in a hierarchy. To obtain the relative importance of these indicators in a reliable but reasonably inexpensive manner from different stakeholders (including SDU residents, building professionals and social workers), the Non-structural Fuzzy Decision Support System was employed. In total, 60 stakeholders were interviewed using structured questionnaires. The perceived relative importance of the indicators was found sensitive to the stakeholder group, implying that people of different backgrounds held divergent views towards the relative importance of the indicators for prioritizing SDUs for enforcement. To achieve a credible decision-making process, it is therefore advisable to have a balanced mix of stakeholders involved in the formulation of the enforcement policy against SDUs. This study is perhaps one of the very first attempts to explore the relative importance of various indicators for differentiating SDUs according to their "quality". Also, the protocol adopted in this study can be applied to uphold selectivity in a scientific manner for future policy making.

Designing Affordable Housing

Christina Zhang

No University affiliation provided

Housing affordability in Australia is at its worst level in over three decades and New South Wales continues to be the least affordable state in Australia. Low and median-income households are increasingly reliant on affordable rental housing. However, poor building design of market affordable housing is a critical issue, as private developers are more inclined to neglect “good design” when developing affordable housing. As the existing policies focus on prioritising the delivery of affordable housing, there has been little to no design guidance on the quality of affordable housing.

On 14 December 2023, the New South Wales Department of Planning (DPE) introduced reforms through amendments to the State Environmental Planning Policy (Housing) 2021 (Housing SEPP) in an attempt to encourage private developers to boost affordable housing. The impact of these reforms are yet to be realised, however, it is necessary to consider whether they have the potential to assist with the meaningful development of quality affordable housing.

The research will consider two case studies of boarding houses located in the City of Sydney Council (the City) which were delivered under the current local planning policies and former State policies and approval processes. The two case studies have marketed themselves as student accommodation, which is a type of boarding house for a specific user group. This comparative analysis will identify the limitations of the current policies in relation to design quality of affordable housing through an assessment of the housing design and the corresponding experience for its residents. Based on these investigations, this research will contemplate whether the new policy changes in the Housing SEPP reforms align with the values of good design of affordable housing and provide recommendations for future policies which can improve quality, long-term affordable housing.

A supply and demand model of the Australian housing market

Rui Zhang, Chris Leishman

University of South Australia, Adelaide, South Australia

While Australia's housing market has long been considered very unaffordable for a significant part of its population, a number of policy interventions during the SARS-CoV2 pandemic are generally thought to have made the situation far worse. In particular, a record low level of centrally-set interest rates coupled with unconventional monetary policy ('quantitative easing') fuelled housing demand and led to a very significant rise in housing prices in almost every part of the country. The macroeconomic shocks were accompanied by a number of behavioural trends, including a rise in migratory flows from major metropolitan centres to regional destinations. Escalating housing prices also fuelled, rather than slowed down, housing demand as market actors increasingly speculated and bid against each other. However, there has been no attempt to unpack or isolate this wide range of macroeconomic, pandemic, policy and behavioural effects. In addition, there is a surprisingly light literature with a focus on the drivers of the Australian housing market. In this session we present a suite of newly estimated time series, econometric model of the Australian housing market. We focus, in particular, on the role of conventional and unconventional monetary policy, behavioural trends, and wealth effects and assess their relative importance to the post Covid boom.

How can housing drive intra-urban residential mobility? Evidence from three years of census data in Sydney

Yunzheng Zhang

University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

Intra-urban residential mobility, defined as the relocation of residents within urban areas, is a common phenomenon in today's increasingly mobile world and serves as a response to the spatial housing market. Examining the relationship between housing and intra-urban residential mobility can facilitate the understanding of the effectiveness of urban and housing planning in (re)distributing the population. As a leading megacity in Australia, Sydney has experienced significant population growth over the past decade. In response to this growth, the Sydney government has implemented housing policies to mitigate overconcentration and guide population distribution, resulting in differentiated spatial housing provisions and frequent intra-urban residential mobility. However, research on the interplay between housing and residential mobility in Sydney remains limited.

This study utilizes housing variables from both origin and destination areas derived from Sydney's 2011, 2016, and 2021 census data. Through regression analyses conducted at Statistical Area Levels 2, 3, and 4, it examines how housing factors, such as dwelling numbers, detached housing, non-private housing, and owner-occupied housing, shape intra-urban residential mobility.

This study contributes to the literature on migration and mobility, housing, and urban spatial dynamics, uncovering the intricate relationship between housing factors and intra-urban residential mobility. The findings provide valuable insights for the formulation of housing policies aimed at optimizing population (re)distribution.

COVID-19 as a disruption to China's 'tenure neutrality' initiative?

Jin Zhu[1], Hal Pawson[2]

[1]The University of Hong Kong, Hong Kong

[2]University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia

In early 2020, while China's centralised governance response rapidly brought COVID-19 under control, tenure inequality and private rental sector precarity continued unabated. Drawing on stakeholder interviews in Shanghai, nation-wide renter complaints analysis, and a review of government pandemic reactions, this paper reveals the stark contrast between the neglect of renters' rights and stringent public health measures. Under this prevailing governance model, renters' wellbeing – including the right to secure occupancy – was effectively over-ridden during the COVID-19 emergency. This approach will have further degraded the reputation and appeal of rental tenure, detracting from state aspirations for greater equality between renting and owner-occupation – the Chinese Government's 'tenure neutrality' initiative, ongoing since 2017. The study highlights how pandemic responses exacerbated existing housing inequalities and argues for proactive government commitments to protect marginalised populations' secure occupancy and avoid accentuating tenure inequality during crisis periods.