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City Social and Housing

SOAC 2021 Conference Track and Abstracts

Track Chairs: Ilan Wiesel, Wendy Stone, Karien Dekker, Kate Raynor

Australasian cities' housing landscape and social and care infrastructures are adapting in response to rapid changes across many domains: population change and diversification; climate change and emergencies; the COVID19 pandemic with economic uncertainty and border closures; ongoing neo-liberalisation, welfare state restructuring; digitisation and technological disruption; housing markets booms and busts; population ageing and generational change. This track seeks papers that address the following issues: housing affordability and its impacts on inequality, and social advantage and disadvantage; urban sprawl and associated housing and social infrastructure needs across cities and regions; homelessness, houselessness and crisis accommodation; housing system reform, and the futures of homeownership, the private rental sector, and social and community housing sectors; social and cultural diversity (gender, age, disability, Indigeneity, ethnicity, class and others) and its implications for housing and social/care infrastructures; and transformative models of housing innovation.



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Do Walkable Neighbourhoods Deliver Less Affordable Shelters, Evidence from Metro Adelaide

Ali Soltani, University of South Australia, Allan Johannes Pieters, Abyaneh Andrew, Arsham Bassiri

Abstract: It is mostly debated that walkable neighbourhoods with high-quality walking infrastructure and close proximity to essential amenities have higher housing values in average. Supporting walkability in suburban greenfield or gentrified environments, on the other hand, entails accommodating middle- and upper-income professionals while screening out lower-middle- and working-class families. In this study, we will investigate the spatial mismatch between the distribution of walkable neighbourhoods (ABS SA1 level) and housing affordability clusters of inhabitants throughout the Adelaide metropolitan area in order to identify the likely discrimination caused by walkability-promoting policies. The housing value data comes from the cadastral database, the affordability data comes from ABS and the walkability statistics are provided by AURIN. Advanced correlation test methods using R-Studio tools and ESRI GIS Pro will be utilised to determine the association between affordability and walkability. The policy impact will be for governmental authorities to reconsider altering neighbourhood planning and housing strategies.

“Stay Safe, Stay Home”: Accommodation Crises in the Covid-19 Pandemic

Alison Young, University of Melbourne

Abstract: ‘Stay home’ orders have been crucial public health tactics during the various lockdowns experienced in 2020 and 2021 in Australian cities. ‘Home’ is positioned as isomorphous with ‘safety’, but many individuals and groups do not have access to home, or safety, or both. This paper considers the impact of stay home orders in a range of material localities during the State of Emergency in Victoria; first, the domestic space of the home and its dangers in the context of family violence; second, the spaces occupied by or allocated to those who engage in rough sleeping or who are without stable housing; and third, hotel rooms, used during the pandemic to house people experiencing homelessness, returned travellers in quarantine, and evacuated detainees. Close examination of such accommodation reveals both the crises exposed by health and social policies, and the limits of our conventional understandings of ‘home’ in a locked-down city.

Hotels and the carceral continuum: 'alternative places of detention' within the urban landscape

Andrew Burridge, Macquarie University

Abstract: This presentation explores the concept of carceral urbanism through the hotel as a specific and unique site of detention. In particular, it examines the use of hotels in Australia since 2002 to detain migrants, visa-overstayers, asylum seekers and refugees. This work draws upon the ‘carceral turn’ in human geography, acknowledging the continuum between the prison or detention centre, and other, often mundane spaces that also operate to incarcerate. These sites of detention are frequently located within local communities and urbanised areas, or in close proximity to airports to allow ease of removal through deportation. Drawing upon the work of Pugliese (2008), it further considers the ‘ordinariness’ and ‘vernacular violence’ of these hotels that are temporarily acquired for the use of detention: their ability to function as a site of incarceration, while remaining indiscernible from the street-level as to their usual role of hospitable and welcoming sites of accommodation.

A two-stage non-compensatory behavioural model of household decision-making for home ownership and/or rental: Preliminary findings

Anita Fairuz, University of South Australia

Abstract: Existing home ownership/rental models typically assume that decisions-makers are able to gather comprehensive information, and make rational trade-offs among all potential home options, various housing attributes and financing options. Given the complexity of information search and decision-making process, coupled with cognitive limitations on information processing capacity, these rational agent models are poor descriptors of actual market behaviour. This study proposes a two-stage non-compensatory behavioural model of household decision-making for home ownership and rental, through discrete choice experiments involving hypothetical multi-attribute home options. Preliminary findings reveal that, in the initial non-comprehensive evaluation phase, houses are screened based on only a handful of the most salient factors, namely price, mortgage, rent, number of bedrooms and workplace proximity. The study predicts that other factors are likely to have statistically significant effect on consideration in the subsequent phase, as decision-makers apply a fully-compensatory strategy to identify the optimal alternative from the reduced choice set.

The Practice of Social Care: On Urban Infrastructures and Assemblages

Cameron Duff, Nicholas Hill , RMIT University, Melbourne

Abstract: Drawing on qualitative data collected among individuals leaving mental health and/or substance use treatment settings in either Melbourne or Sydney, the paper explores the social, affective and material dimensions of 'care' and the ways care is enacted in complex socio-material infrastructures of support and recovery. This approach moves beyond the individual subject of health and illness to consider the wider repertoires of social, affective and material events, relations and practices that sustain wellbeing as a distinctive mode of social care, what Lauren Berlant calls a 'commons'. The concept of the commons reimagines social care by way of pooled affective, material and embodied resources, and the ways that bodies draw upon these common resources in the restoration of infrastructures of care and support in cities. Revisioning care in this way offers new ways of thinking about the social infrastructures needed to sustain care and social inclusion in cities.

Can planning incentives deliver affordable housing in our cities and regions? Evidence from NSW

Catherine Gilbert, The University of Sydney, Sha Liu, Nicole Gurran

Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the critical role housing plays in the health, safety and functioning of cities, but many Australian cities and regions now face rapidly declining housing affordability in contexts of extremely limited affordable housing supply. While there is an opportunity to use the planning system to lift affordable housing provision, there is limited evidence of how planning incentives perform in practice. In this context, this paper examines the outcomes of a NSW planning policy, implemented in 2009, that incentivises private sector developers to include a proportion of affordable rental housing in their multi-unit residential developments by limiting scope for development refusal and providing a state-wide density bonus. Using a primary dataset capturing the details of individual developed applications, we examine the types of developers that have used the policy; the characteristics and locations of their projects; and the implications for the supply of affordable rental housing.

'Transforming public housing renewal policy through evaluation and learning?'

Christian Nygaard, Swinburne University of Technology, Rachel Maguire, Simon Pinnegar

Abstract: Transformative change takes place through innovation, adaptation and learning. This paper draws on a series of key actor interviews with government, private sector and NfPs in Adelaide, Melbourne and Sydney to analyse how evaluation and learning is shaping the formation of public housing renewal policies. The results show that shared understandings can become a barrier to policy innovation and experimentation. Evaluations thus frequently (not always) perform a policy justification role, rather than a policy evolution role. For public housing and urban renewal this narrows the capacity for transformative change (in diverse urban settings) and ability to adapt to new challenges.

What happened to health, wellbeing, and equity? A critical analysis of metropolitan planning and housing strategies in New South Wales

David Lilley, University of New South Wales, Hal Pawson

Abstract: Contemporary urban planning and housing policies have their origins in efforts to improve health and wellbeing, particularly of the least advantaged. But has this goal been retained? We employed Werner Ulrich's Critical Systems Heuristics to systematically analyse the purposes, beneficiaries, measures, resources, expertise, and worldviews explicit or implicit in three current strategies pertaining to Sydney: A Metropolis of Three Cities; Housing 2041; and Future Directions for Social Housing in New South Wales. This revealed different underlying purposes, different approaches to planning and measurement, and the subordination of health, wellbeing, and equity to other priorities. The common thread that runs between the documents is the combination of an instrumentalist focus with a market orientation. Explanations and potential responses are offered at both macro and individual strategy levels.

How cities can avoid being burned by hot housing markets.

Derrick Anderson, University of Illinois of Chicago

Abstract: As the cost of housing increases in high income countries certain cities are becoming extremely expensive. While city leaders may enjoy the higher property values, tax revenue, and new construction they also have to manage the effects of growing housing inequality including increasing homelessness, longer commutes for essential workers, and strains on the environment and infrastructure. This case study aims to explore the policies enacted by cities to manage high growth housing markets and how effective are these policies. By comparing three exceptional hot residential property markets (Auckland, NZ, Austin, USA, Vancouver, CAN) an understanding of how to manage housing markets to better benefit residents at all income levels and reduce the negative impacts of expensive housing markets.

Safe as Houses? Eviction trends in the Victorian Social Housing Sector.

Dino Varrasso, West Heidelberg Community Legal Service

Abstract: The past two decades of housing policy in Victoria demonstrates state withdrawal from social housing provision and management. The only growth is occurring in the community housing provider component of the sector, with real declines in public housing stock year on year as a result of estate renewal, and stock and tenancy transfer. While there has been significant debate about this privatisation of public housing, less attention has been paid to what it means for tenancy rights. This paper examines eviction outcomes across the Victorian social housing sector to provide a better understanding of the implications for tenancy rights. The paper will present analysis of data from VCAT comparing eviction

outcomes between different social housing landlords. This analysis reveals that tenants in Community Housing, especially among the largest providers, face a greater risk of eviction than public tenants questioning the tenancy rights outcomes of this policy trajectory.

Medium Density Housing and Tenants' Mental Health: Lessons from COVID-19 in Australia

Farahnaz Sharifi, Swinburne University of Technology, Wendy Stone

Abstract: Densified cities provide housing for more people; however, can leads to smaller dwelling spaces, reduced urban green space per capita, and escalate ambient stressors. Some studies show that apartment living (i.e., small size, crowding, lack of appropriate daylight) can negatively affect resident health and well-being. In the Australian context, increased density is strongly associated with rental tenures, with an increasing proportion of Australians who live in rental homes in densified areas. Lockdown conditions due to COVID-19, and their associated mental pressures, are a concern of health authorities and policy-makers. Critical emerging questions for resilient urban futures include which types of housing density can support optimal urban mental health, including in conditions of pandemic-related stress. Drawing on newly available Australian Rental Housing Conditions Dataset (2020), we estimate a set of hedonic models of mental health to evaluate the impact of dwelling type dwelling on tenant mental health. Housing policy implications, including the potential urban benefits of medium-density housing, are discussed.

Indigenous Community Planning – collective Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander led reform of Queensland’s Indigenous Community Housing Organisation (ICHO) sector towards community control.

Greg Kitson, Griffith University

Abstract: This paper draws on research exploring HVAC maintenance practices in mid-tier commercial office sector, including the largest and most comprehensive national survey of HVAC contractors and facilities managers to date. We consider the socio-technical and commercial barriers to improved HVAC maintenance in the mid-tier, and why effective maintenance regimes can’t be ignored if we want healthy and liveable cities that endure.

Measuring Super and Stable Diversity in Australian Urban Centres

Helen Mok, SGS Economics and Planning & ANU Crawford School of Policy Studies, Kishan Ratnam (SGS), Hayley Henderson (ANU), Helen Sullivan (ANU), Marcus Spiller (SGS)

Abstract: COVID-19 has been a large disrupter of lives around the world. What it has taught us is that people place importance on connection and their communities. It has transformed our understanding of home and how we envisage our sense of place. Culturally diverse localities create a community of varied perspectives and identities agglomerating in a shared space, which some authors claim confer a range of social and economic benefits that build resilience in times of crisis. This paper examines the question of defining and identifying locations that are both “super” and “stably” diverse. Drawing on spatially disaggregated panel data (ABS Census and HILDA), we present a methodology to identify culturally ‘super diverse’ local areas across Australian cities, assess whether they have been stable in this diversity over time (i.e. are factors like gentrification reducing diversity), and, where displacement has occurred, examine the locational and socioeconomic outcomes of displaced residents.

Care practices and social housing experiences in Australia

Iris Levin, RMIT University, Kathleen Flanagan, Ariella Meltzer, Julia Verdouw, Anthea Vreugdenhil, Meera Varadharajan

Abstract: Since the 1990s, with the rise of neoliberalism in most countries as the accepted governance norm, social housing and other forms of social support have been affected severely. In Australia, any new supply of social housing in all states and territories has almost come to an end. Social (public and community) housing tenants have been seen as problem tenants or problem families, and their need for social housing has been increasingly framed in the public discourse as rooted in their individual attributes, rather than societal structures. Against this backdrop, a discourse around care has been emerging as an alternative way of thinking and acting in response to neoliberal policies and practices. In this paper, we use data collected from qualitative in-depth interviews with social housing providers and tenants in four Australian states, to highlight the experiences of both providers and tenants about the ways and extent to which tenants are treated with an ethic of care when living in social housing. We adopt Power and Mee's (2020) understanding of care as a relational activity and moral practice involving 'reaching out to something other than the self' (Tronto, 1993: 102 in Power & Mee, 2020: 490). Our findings suggest that in its current form, social housing in the four Australian states does not include an integral structural form of care. This can be amended with structural changes to the housing system itself that address the shortfalls of the system rather than blaming individual tenants for their need of social housing.

Impacts of COVID-19 on Housing Affordability and Development Trends on the Gold Coast

Isara Khanjanasthiti, Bond University, Dr Lynne Armitage

Abstract: COVID-19 has significantly impacted the economic, environmental and social dimensions of our society both locally and internationally. The Gold Coast housing market is no exception as it has, over the past year, undergone substantial transformation due to the pandemic. Fuelled by a surge in interstate demand, higher housing prices and rents and severe shortages in housing supply for purchases and rentals are some of the noteworthy changes the Gold Coast has experienced. This paper investigates the key impacts of COVID-19 on housing affordability on the Gold Coast and examines trends in housing development in response to these changes. Considering a range of supply and demand factors relevant to the housing market, the paper concludes with public policy recommendations to address the negative housing impacts of COVID-19 on the Gold Coast, thus ensuring a more positive outlook for the city.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and Housing in Aotearoa

Jacqueline Paul, Unitec Institute of Technology

Abstract: Te Tiriti o Waitangi is a treaty negotiated between Māori and the British Crown (1840). It affirmed Māori tino rangatiratanga and, in Article two, guaranteed the protection of kāinga and whenua. Aotearoa New Zealand's current housing shortage and increasingly vulnerable and homeless problems continue to be an ongoing challenge for Indigenous Māori and the Crown. Declining homeownership rates show the harsh realities of this housing crisis, the shortage of social provision, a rise of housing deprivation (overcrowding and habitability) and a rapid increase in homelessness. This paper builds on the work of He Rautaki Whakatauria Whare o Te Tiriti o Waitangi, a Masters dissertation that explores "What might a Te Tiriti-anchored housing strategy look like for Aotearoa New Zealand?". Specifically, it seeks to use 'Treaty principles and articles' as currently articulated in legal and policy-making settings to assess the current depiction and address the housing crisis within the Māori community.

The transformative potential of Māori cohousing

James Berghan, The University of Otago

Abstract: Māori (the indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) are predominantly an urban population. The current housing stock in urban Aotearoa, though, is almost exclusively based on settler-colonial constructs of private property. Alongside a general resurgence of indigeneity in Aotearoa, there is a growing body of literature supporting the establishment of more culturally-appropriate housing. This project draws from case studies in Auckland, New Zealand, to explore how papakāinga ('traditional' ways of Māori housing and living, usually on ancestral land) are being re-established in urban settings. Contemporary papakāinga share aspirations with other collective housing models such as cohousing. This paper introduces the possibility of a hybrid approach, where Māori co-opt elements of the cohousing model. Such an approach has the transformative potential to both provide an alternative entry point into the housing market for Māori and to foster cultural connections for urban Māori living away from their ancestral lands.

Melbourne's elite in Toorak: Reflections and thoughts for future research

Karien Dekker, RMIT University, Melbourne

Abstract: Urban geographers have found that residents of Australia's elite suburbs use their social capital to keep the suburbs as they are. New residents are welcomed into the community if they have similar socio-economic status, whereas cultural (racial) background seems less important. It is unclear, however, how disability, gender, class and race are intersected and affect civic action. This presentation explores the themes of disability, gender, class and race in an advantaged suburb. The results are based on participatory observation in one of Melbourne's most elite suburbs, Toorak. I will attend both private and public venues in the suburb, and use my experiences as the basis for future research plans. The work will contribute to existing elite suburb studies by adding an insider's perspective of the intersectionality of disability, gender, class and race in an elite suburb. They will also be the basis for new ideas for future research.

Institutional Capacity Development in an emerging policy area: the challenges of voluntary planning agreements for affordable housing

Katrina Raynor, University of Melbourne, Maddie Judge, Angela Paladino, Matthew Palm, Georgia Warren - Myers

Abstract: In July 2018 the state of Victoria in Australia implemented a range of legislative and governance changes to encourage the negotiation of affordable housing agreements between local councils, private developers and not-for-profit housing providers. This resulted in expansion of formal and informal mechanisms for cross-sectoral delivery of affordable housing. However, little affordable housing has emerged since this change. We draw on Healey's Institutional Capacity Development framework to examine the importance of knowledge resources, relational resources and mobilisation capacity in implementing voluntary planning mechanisms. We draw on 20 interviews and a longitudinal survey conducted in 2019 and 2021 examining affordable housing stakeholders in Victoria. We argue that negotiated outcomes are beginning to build knowledge and relational capacity in the affordable housing sector but institutional arrangements are still too loose to allow for significant collective action.

Mobilisation capacity is constrained by a lack of shared ‘rules of the game,’ with implications for negotiation-based planning arrangements more broadly.

Piloting innovation: how our enamour with experimentation is reshaping housing strategies in Australia

Laura Goh, University of Sydney

Abstract: The impact of experimental governance on housing has begun to manifest in state housing strategies in Australia. The use of pilots, demonstration projects and experiments to ‘hack’ the housing system by the private and not-for profit sectors in Australia are well documented but the trend of government established housing experiments has not been widely explored. This paper presents a detailed policy review of current state housing strategies and related policies in Australia (released between 2017 and 2021) and reveals that many state governments are so enamoured with the promise of innovation, they are making space to allow experimentation to disrupt their own planning systems. This study observes that the space for innovation comes from a variety of policy types (housing strategies, apartment design guides), and that the parameters for experimentation are diverse, as are the final expected outcomes.

Cracks in the compact city: how bad are building defects in strata and what needs to change to protect apartment residents?

Laura Crommelin, University of New South Wales, Sian Thompson, Hazel Easthope, Bill Randolph, Martin Loosemore, Hyungmo Yang

Abstract: While building defects in apartment buildings have become a high-profile political issue in the aftermath of events like Sydney’s Opal Tower evacuation, publicly available and accessible data on the extent and severity of the issue is extremely limited. This presentation reports on the findings of a two-year research project examining the prevalence and drivers of building defects in strata-titled residential buildings in Sydney, NSW. The research findings highlight the challenges of collecting data on defects and the implications of this lack of information for industry, for regulators, for apartment owners and residents, and for the effective operation of the housing market. In addition, the presentation will offer a brief overview of recent reforms to the NSW regulatory landscape in relation to building quality, and propose further changes to policy and practice to ensure improved outcomes for Australia’s growing population of apartment residents.

Income, Housing and Precarity: the Australian suburban settlement in an age of uncertainty

Laurence Troy, University of Sydney, Bill Randolph

Abstract: Australia’s post-WW2 model of ‘social citizenship’ connected high wage rates with supportive welfare regime policies, epitomised in what Paul Kelly called the post-war ‘social settlement’ (Kelly 1994). This enabled households to secure their own homes and underpinned the expansion of the nation’s system of suburban settlements. Australia has experienced a significant rupture in this post-war social settlement since the 1980s and more recent evidence points towards a generational shift in both housing and employment pathways for those currently navigating the transition into independent living and beyond. This paper will argue that the disintegration of these two interrelated pillars of Australia’s post-war ‘suburban settlement’ – home ownership and income security – is having consequences on patterns

of urban settlement. It attempts to make connections between wider debates on Australia's model of social citizenship and patterns of urban settlement that support future aspirations for Australian society.

Flexible growth scenarios in Melbourne: impacts and opportunities of diversified dwelling supply

Lee- Anne Khor, Monash University, Rutger Pasman

Abstract: In recent decades, Melbourne's real population growth outstripped statistical projections, while land-value development models produced uneven distributions of housing supply and dwelling types. Despite adverse social and environmental impacts, pressure for new affordable supply saw the status quo largely maintained; large-scale, high-density development in inner areas, low-density expansion on the urban fringe and uncoordinated small-scale infill across established suburbs. Today, COVID-19 has stopped Melbourne's growth in its tracks, casting uncertainty over the viability and timing of future housing delivery. The cost and complexity of large-scale development (inner or fringe) is particularly susceptible, pointing to the potential advantages of smaller-scale, more flexible infill. This paper presents a series of speculative growth scenarios in Melbourne that premise medium-density design models in response to short- and long-term housing needs. The outcomes visualise alternative settlement patterns and indicate potential policy formation for enhancing the quality, sustainability and equity of Melbourne's suburbs.

From provision to subsidisation: Tracking changes in Commonwealth rental housing policy

Liam Davies, RMIT University, Melbourne

Abstract: Australia has a long legacy of direct provision of housing to those in need, in the form of public housing. The Commonwealth-State Housing Agreements, which operated from 1945 to 2008 provided a framework whereby the Commonwealth provided financial support for the States to provide public housing. However, shifts in political and economic thinking since the 1980s has changed this paradigm, with a greater reliance on the not-for-profit and private sectors to provide low-cost housing to those in need. This has been achieved partly through a mixture of subsidies and tax concessions. The political, economic, and social consequences of moving away from direct provision to direct subsidy are analysed. This analysis calculates the total funding allocated towards private market housing and estimates the number of public housing dwellings which said funding may have provided. The outcomes of subsidy are contrasted with potential outcomes of provision of public housing.

Barriers and opportunities for medium density housing in Cairns: A stakeholder perspective

Lisa Law, James Cook University, Sarah Gibson

Abstract: Medium Density Housing (MDH) is advocated as a method to address housing affordability while retaining the amenity and liveability of lower-density urban forms. Despite these advantages, affordable and diverse MDH proves challenging to implement in suburbs with access to employment and services. While some scholars explore barriers and solutions to implementing MDH, regional city contexts are less understood. Stakeholder perspectives on MDH and its implementation are also limited. This research presents a stakeholder analysis in the regional city of Cairns to address these important gaps. It reveals key limitations in the Cairns context, especially market demand for multi-story units, high construction costs and a risk-averse banking and investor sector. In the face of these challenges, strategic planning,

leadership, cross-sectoral and community engagement are essential to support effective MDH infill to help Cairns achieve housing affordability, housing diversity and sustainable urban growth.

Experience of high-rise apartment living in Australia: A case study of Southbank, Melbourne.

Louise Hill, University of Melbourne , Elek Pafka

Abstract: High-rise housing is a relatively recent housing typology in Australia, with conventional single-detached homes having dominated the Australian housing narrative for many decades. Many planning policies from the Victorian State Government emphasise urban consolidation and a compact city, particularly in Melbourne's inner-city. Victoria has experienced the most significant percentage of high-rise construction than any other state in Australia, with super high-rise buildings making up 29% of the state's apartment approvals. Southbank, an inner-city suburb located less than one kilometre from Melbourne's central business district, has undergone significant expansion in high-rise and super high-rise apartment approvals, and is now home to some of Australia's tallest apartment buildings. Therefore, this thesis explores how high-rise residents experience Southbank, Melbourne, their sense of place and how they live there. Two sub-questions include: What are Southbank residents sense of place within the high-rise building in which they live? What are Southbank residents sense of place within the suburb? This research provides valuable insights into how high-rise communities experience place and connection within their apartments and outside their buildings that must be considered in future planning. As our cities grow in population, the move towards urban consolidation will continue. High density high-rise apartments zones will play a significant role in this transition. The connectedness, sense of place and liveability for residents of high-rise communities, must be considered in the future planning of Southbank and similar areas, so that enhanced liveability contributes to the overall vibrancy of Melbourne.

Exploring relationships between house prices, affordability and the built environment: A hedonic pricing study of the value of walkability by socioeconomic disadvantage

Lucy Gunn, RMIT University, Melbourne , Tayebah Saghapour, Billie Giles-Corti, Gavin Turrell

Abstract: Hedonic pricing models measure the relationship between environmental, structural and locational features of houses and house prices. However, few researchers have explored this relationship by socioeconomic disadvantage ignoring the socio-spatial patterning within cities. The aim of this research is to determine whether relationships between walkability and house prices differed by socio-economic disadvantage. To test this, we used stratified linear regression models based on quintiles of socioeconomic disadvantage in metropolitan Melbourne, Australia including explanatory variables relating to walkability and its components and public transport access. Across all socio-economic strata, destination access increased house prices; and, houses in the most disadvantaged areas were more affordable, in part, to a lack of amenity. Future planning could redress the relationship between walkability and house prices by making all new areas walkable. Furthermore, in amenity rich established areas, inclusionary zoning policies could increase access to social and affordable housing for lower income households.

Energy efficiency in the private rental sector: what actually motivates landlords?

Michaela Lang, Monash University, Ruth Lane, Rob Raven, Kun Zhao

Abstract: Rental properties have lower energy efficiency than owner-occupied homes, resulting in wasted greenhouse gas emissions, discomfort, and even fatalities. Previous studies propose many factors that influence landlords' energy efficiency retrofitting.

This paper examines landlords' retrofit behaviour drawing on a systematic review, survey of 200 landlords, follow up interviews with 20 landlords, and a policymaker forum.

Concern for tenants' comfort, relationships with tenants, and knowledge about energy efficiency in the rental property differentiated landlords who retrofitted from those who did not. Some believed increased capital value or longer tenancies would offset retrofit costs. Environmental concern played no role in landlords' decisions. As the strongest motivator for landlords' retrofitting is concern for tenants, policymakers should emphasise measures that promote tenants' wellbeing.

Individual landlords' retrofit activity will not transform the private rental sector. However, building consensus for systemic change is difficult while landlords are framed as 'mum and dad investors' who require protection.

Building types to address the missing middle: a review of typologies to increase density in Australian innercity suburbs.

Mirko Guaralda, Queensland University of Technology

Abstract: Urban density is recognised as a paramount variable in addressing cities viability and it is becoming strategic also in achieving sustainable and resilient communities. Australian urbanism has been relying on the imported models of high-rise CBD, populated by towers allocating offices or small units, and low-density suburbia, articulated in a variety of low-rise dwellings. Medium-density is a paradigm often discussed and seldom explored in our cities, often exploring the adaptation of local existing building types. This paper reviews a series of building typologies and evaluates their potential and adaptability to the Australian landscape. Case studies are sourced in consolidated medium-density, medium-rise, mixed-use cities, reflecting on historic typologies and their contemporary adaptation.

Home motivations and lived experiences in Australian housing cooperatives and cohousing communities

Nestor Agustin Guity Zapata, Swinburne University of Technology, Wendy Stone

Abstract: In Australia, housing cooperative and cohousing may represent an alternative solution to the country's housing crisis. These forms of collaborative housing are characterised by promoting mutual help among their members, an element linked to ontological security and the creation of sense of home. However, the greatest evidence of the dynamics of these communities is focused on liberal economic countries (LECs); raising critical questions about our current understanding of housing commons in the Australian context - via resident's voice. Addressing this gap, we conducted a scoping review on motivations and lived experience in Australia, which we contrasted with LECs. Results revealed differences in the motivations for living in this forms of collaborative housing, social aspect being the most important. The lived experience yielded five thematic areas: social capital, economic, environmental, design and knowledge generation/transfer. Findings indicate that a more inclusive approach is needed in the growing field of collaborative housing studies.

Shining a light on the shadows of urban energy poverty: mapping hidden energy vulnerability

Nicola Willand, Nooshin Torabi, Ralph Horne, RMIT University, Melbourne,

Abstract: ‘Hidden energy vulnerability’ is the propensity of households to experience physiological, social and mental harm from limited access to essential energy services which is not captured by conventional indicators of energy disadvantage. Hence, assisting such households is a preventive public health intervention that requires new ways of identification and action. To better understand the mechanisms that result in energy vulnerability being hidden and to explore whether collaborations could assist in discovering at-risk households, we interviewed 34 key personnel from health, energy, housing and social service organisations in Melbourne, Australia. Types of hidden energy poverty included underconsumption, incidental masking, disguised vulnerability, intentional concealment and denial of risks of energy deprivation. Methods of identification included careful listening, observations during home visits, health care assessments, rent arrears, referrals from other services and spatial techniques. The discussion highlights the opportunities of collaborative approaches for delivering equitable outcomes in the low carbon energy transition.

Deregulated planning for affordable housing supply? The case of secondary dwellings in NSW

Pranita Shrestha, RMIT University, Melbourne, Nicole Gurran

Abstract: Situated within wider neoliberal urban policy context, deregulation has long been promoted as a key response to housing affordability, whereby the ‘market’ is seen to be best placed to address unmet housing needs. Australia’s urban reform agenda has also sought to deregulate residential planning controls as a strategy for enabling new and diverse housing production. This paper examines outcomes of one such deregulatory strategy, focusing on NSW state’s planning reform designed for secondary dwellings (‘granny flats’) to be constructed ‘as of right’ in residential zones. Through interviews with industry and local councils we analyse the role of ‘deregulation’ in enabling a market response to housing need and highlight the limits of this approach as a solution to affordability.

The right to resist: theorising resident opposition to the Public Housing Renewal Program in Melbourne, Australia

Rachel Maguire, Swinburne University of Technology

Abstract: The question of what to do with Melbourne’s ageing public housing estates remains a persistent problem for policymakers attempting to address Melbourne’s growing housing affordability crisis. International evidence demonstrates that contemporary practices of estate redevelopment often result in unequal outcomes for public and private residents, and resistance is emerging worldwide in response to this form of neoliberal urban governance. This research asks: what modes of resistance are emerging from public and private residents in response to the Victorian Government’s Public Housing Renewal Program and how is this resistance enacted within and potentially shaped by redevelopment processes? Through a comparative case-study analysis this project explores how neighbourhood context and spatial history and community structures influence strategies of resistance and how resistance is enacted within redevelopment processes. Findings address the need for critical analysis that looks beyond the boundaries of the single housing estate to examine the strategies guiding public housing renewal.

The capabilities to retrofit – A place-focused capabilities approach to retrofit poverty

Sarah Robertson, Nicola Willan, Ralph Horne, RMIT University, Melbourne,

Abstract: Research on energy poverty has increased attention on the risk of uneven outcomes of decarbonisation efforts. Many decarbonisation policies and programmes assume a prime role for householder agency and focus on financial market-based incentives to encourage individual action. Not only can these initiatives be regressive, they also pay little attention to social structures and place-specific dimensions that shape people’s opportunities to retrofit their homes for improved thermal comfort and health, and reduced energy costs and carbon emissions. This paper proposes an approach that combines elements of capabilities with place-focused analyses. Applying this in empirical research on householder experiences of residential retrofits across an urban and regional location in Victoria, the paper presents insights into how spatial, social, and affective dimensions of retrofit empower and constrain householders. We argue that such understandings of household retrofit disrupt dominant neoliberal approaches, reshape narratives about the challenges and opportunities of low carbon home improvement, and open dialogue about the interventions and governance needed to ensure more households can improve their homes.

Diffuse informality and the modes of private renting

Sharon Parkinson, Swinburne University, Kath Hulse, Wendy Stone, Steven Rowley and Amity James

Abstract: Private rental housing has long comprised a diffuse mix of formal and informal practices. Dualistic conceptions of formality and informality have dominated housing and urban research but are becoming challenged in developed markets as interest turns to understanding emergent fragmentation across family and sharing economies alongside financialized and rentier economies. In this paper we aim to shed new light on the diffuse mix of informal-formal ‘modes’ of renting through the development of continuum framework that extends beyond mainstream notions of the Private Rental Sector, including the commodifying of caring relations and dependencies through paying rent to families. Within this framework, the paper unpacks and reveals the limitations of well-used concepts of property rights and tenure calling for more nuanced measures of the rental market and secure occupancy. We apply this conceptualisation of modes of renting framework within a special purpose Australian survey of more 7000 individuals.

Cracks in the compact city: assessing defect prevalence in NSW low-rise strata buildings using Home Building Compensation data

Sian Thompson, City Future Research Centre, Laura Crommelin, Bill Randolph, Hazel Easthope, Martin Loosemore, Hyungmo Yang

Abstract: Recent events at Opal Tower and Neo 200 have highlighted the significant risk defects pose in apartments. However, assessing defect prevalence is difficult, with data in this area severely lacking. This presentation draws on analysis of NSW’s Home Building Compensation Fund data to estimate defect prevalence in low-rise strata-titled buildings, one component of a larger project examining the prevalence and drivers of strata building defects in Sydney. The dataset included all multi-unit strata buildings less than four storeys built in NSW between 2010-2020, comprising one third of all NSW strata developments over that period. The presentation outlines the prevalence of defect notifications for this dataset, estimates average claim amounts and analyses the incidence of notifications by socio-economic status (SEIFA). The findings highlight the prevalence and financial implications of defective building work, issues of equity and the necessity of reform to better protect owners.

Doing Housing Differently? The City of Sydney's Alternative Housing Ideas challenge and the rise of housing innovation

Sophia Maalsen, University of Sydney

Abstract: The housing landscape is changing as a result of multiple socio-economic, environmental and political factors. An outcome of these pressures is the growth in alternative housing models as housing providers and consumers innovate with novel models, tenure, techniques and practices to 'hack' housing and increase diversity in the housing system. In this paper, I use the City of Sydney's Alternative Housing Ideas Challenge to understand how the practices and logics of hacking are disrupting housing. Experimentation and prototyping are positioned as a means to intervene in the housing system. The Challenge demonstrates the conceptual value of the hack – it is a way to rethink a broken system – but it also takes actions encouraging “different ways of doing”. This has implications for the way we think about housing issues, but also for how we respond to these issues, and how we provide and live in housing.

Quality and energy improvements for low-income renters in Australia: policy and programs for a just sustainable housing transition.

Trivess Moore, RMIT University, Melbourne, Bhavna Middha, Ralph Horne, Emma baker, Nicola Willand, Lyrrian Daniel

Abstract: People living in rental housing are disproportionately impacted on by poor dwelling quality and low energy efficiency often resulting in energy hardship. Tenant households face multiple barriers to improve their dwelling quality and energy performance. To understand what dwelling and energy related supports are available within the rental sector, this paper presents a review of recent policy and support programmes for low-income households in Australia. The paper also presents interviews with low-income renters to explore their lived experiences of attempts to improve quality and energy efficiency outcomes and reflections from policy and stakeholder workshops. The evidence finds that support programs in Australia are tenure-neutral, and often overlook specific requirements of tenant households. The analysis identifies three interconnecting problems: a material (housing stock/condition) issue; an income inequality issue; AND a rights (tenancy) issue. Future policy and support development must target the intersection of all three issues.

Housing policy co-design via an 'aspirations lens': An Australian illustration and provocation

Wendy Stone, Sharon Parkinson Swinburne University of Technology, Amity James, Steven Rowley, Curtin University

Abstract: Urban development practices increasingly include residents. Within housing policy, involvement of residents is rare. Australian examples of participatory approaches include deliberative development of discrete housing complexes and other targeted, niche areas. With regards to wider housing policy development, including housing assistance program design, resident involvement is limited to non-existent. Underpinned by the concept of participatory co-design, this paper examines how an 'aspirations' lens can enhance resident involvement in housing policy development. Responses of 7,500 participants to the Australian Housing Aspirations (2018) survey and associated qualitative interviews in metropolitan/regional areas, are used to examine: housing aspirations held by diverse population groups nationally; housing aspirations barriers; and the housing assistance mix participants identify as necessary to support their attainment of future housing. Contextualising housing aspirations as a policy co-design

pathway extends current approaches to the study of housing aspirations, while simultaneously provoking a more inclusive approach to housing policy development.

Bondi to Byron: A tale of two COVID's in NSW's rental market

William Thackway, Bill Randolph, Christopher Pettit, City Futures Research Centre

Abstract: The COVID-19 pandemic has stifled international travel and triggered a resurgence of domestic tourism and regional migration. This paper will examine the diverging stories of the impact of COVID-19 on NSW's urban (Sydney) and regional (RNSW) rental markets from 2019-2021 by triangulating tourist activity, property sales prices, and the rental market. Firstly, Sydney's quarterly rental prices have consistently fallen since the start of the pandemic and display a negative relationship with Airbnb activity. By contrast, declining rental supply and increasing rental prices throughout RNSW in 2020-21 indicate that greater tourist activity is associated with rental price pressures. Case studies of regional and metro Airbnb hotspots display a trend towards coastal rental markets being particularly impacted, illuminating a preference towards sea-change migration. Finally, the paper will utilise data on housing prices and vacancy rates to further understand the transfer of housing between the short-term rental, long-term rental, and property sales markets.

Foreign real estate investment boom and bust in Sydney, Australia: Chinese property developers after the bust

Xiao Ma, University of Sydney,

Abstract: Australia experienced a foreign real estate investment boom and bust in the 2010s. This study examines the responses of Chinese developers' housing production to the bust in Sydney. It's framed within a wider debate about foreign real estate investment in Australia in the 21st century and a complex set of China–Australia geopolitical relations. It builds around the idea of capital switching and expands it into the transnational context. It demonstrates the three phases of capital switching between Australia to China and points out the two initiative switching of Chinese property developers' housing practices - 'customer switching and product switching'.

Platform informality: online rental housing markets in Sydney, Australia

Zahra Nasreen, University of Sydney, Nicole Gurrán, Pranita Shrestha

Abstract: Digital platforms are increasingly mediating how people seek and access housing. They offer powerful tools for property owners and investors, landlords, agents, and tenants, to market and search for accommodation meeting particular criteria from price and tenure to location and dwelling characteristics. This paper examines housing platforms and the data they generate to provide insights into these housing markets and practices, focusing on the lesser known or informal sector of the rental market, where conventional regulatory tenancy protections or housing standards are traded for lower cost accommodation. We examine the housing listings advertised on four different platforms: realestate.com.au, flatmates.com.au, gumtree.com.au and airbnb.com in Sydney, Australia, focusing on listings placed in August 2020. Using these datasets, we unearth a housing system 'substructure' of discrete types of informal tenure and dwelling, finding that each platform caters to a different type of platform housing informality.