

Liveability framework for social and affordable higher density housing

QShelter Presentation

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Presenter
Assoc. Prof. Sacha Reid
Griffith University

Project team:

Core SBEnrc Partners

BGC Australia, Government of Western Australia, Queensland Government, Curtin University, Griffith University and RMIT University

PSG Chair

Sue Ash AO

Project Affiliates

Brisbane Housing Company Ltd – Foundation Housing – Queenslanders with Disabilities Network - Rowlinson Architects – Urban Development Institute of Australia WA - Common Ground Qld - Keystart Home Loans

Research Team

Griffith University - Judy Kraatz, Sacha Reid, Savindi Caldera
Curtin University - Francesco Mancini, John Venable, Justin Owen, Tanja Glusac, Francesca Perugia.

Research aim and outcome

Aim: Investigate how to better deliver people and place-oriented, liveable, social and affordable housing in medium and high-density urban precincts.

Outcome: *A Liveability Framework for Medium to High Density Urban Housing*



5 Green Square Close – supplied by Brisbane Housing Company

Focus areas

➤ Social / Cultural value

- maximise liveability outcomes
- minimise risks associated with higher density

➤ Build value

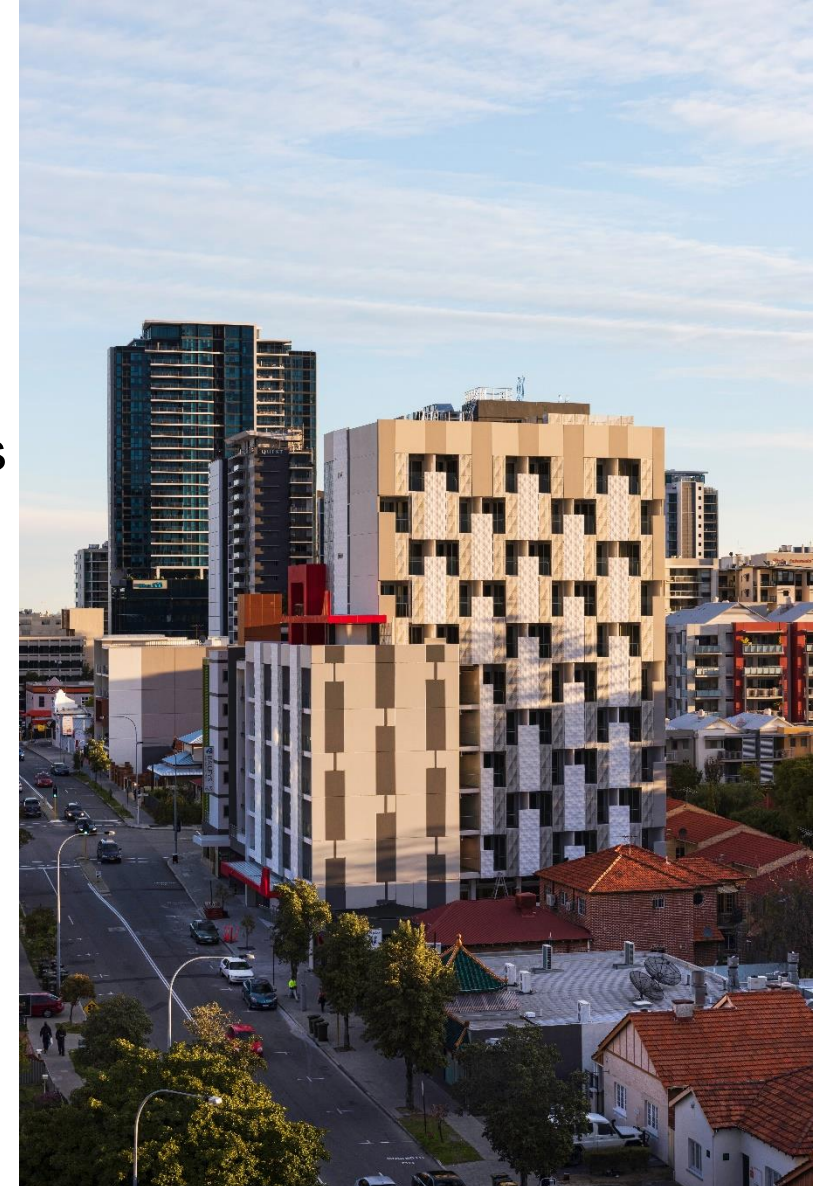
- Improved social, economic and environmental outcomes
- Balance upfront cost with whole-of-life benefits.

➤ Government role

- Regulation and policy roles to drive new urban forms.

➤ Improved adoption

- Universal access beyond the minimum standards.
- Access across the many stages of a person's life.



Bennett Street, Perth – supplied by Foundation Housing



Research method

Literature review

- Review of literature, incl. government policy and strategy, SBEnc, AHURI and international – to inform draft framework.
- Themes include co-design, technology-based enablers; leading practice; value equation/cost benefit; national and state regulation and adoption; and pandemic responses.

Case studies (incl 23 stakeholder interviews)

- 5 Green Square Close, Fortitude Valley, Qld
- 67 Bennett Street, East Perth, WA
- Drummond Precinct Ellenbrook, WA



Liveability Framework for Higher Density Social and Affordable housing

- Main project output – to provide a practical tool to inform/assess future higher density housing policy and developments.

Some stakeholder insights - liveability

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| <p><i>Integrated and inclusive place-based planning-</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Access to variety of restaurants, meeting places, greenspace important. • Accessibility important, meaning level thresholds, compliant ramps, extended ends of balustrades and things that give to clues of accessible space. • Community engagement and buy-in is key. • Multiple stakeholders were involved, there was interest in sustainable, green architecture, obtained GreenStar accreditation. |
| <p><i>Connectivity (natural, social, physical and virtual)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 Green Square has an internal atrium providing access to green space and alternate circulation routes. Splitting building in 2 enabled cross and long-way ventilation, with flyscreen doors as transition to the unit, moderating ventilation, privacy and access. • Gardens on private balconies and communal areas – tenants choose own plants– adaptability. • Naturally ventilated open space provided – air-conditioning not then needed. • Generous open and communal spaces provided. • Access to support services and activated spaces. • No Wi-Fi provided - often unaffordable with many residents on support pensions. |
| <p><i>Safety (design and awareness)</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure access via swipe card and lift access important. • Staff on-site 24/7, cameras, access pass, gates and mesh. • Built relationship with Qld Police Service to talk about personal safety for people |
| <p><i>Community and social wellbeing</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental health support services available on-site. • Central hub or go-to housing support agency needed. • Understanding of liveability and dignified opportunities important. |
| <p><i>Continuous improvement</i></p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence gathered every 2 years through a post-occupancy survey. • Feedback from long-term tenancies sort. • Hard data (evidence-based decision making) is difficult to find and manage – can get very convoluted and complicated. • Informal feedback from residents and incident reports. |

Some stakeholder insights - accessibility

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| Walkability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Footpaths accessible, easy to negotiate, incl. tactile markers - also make things more liveable. • Precinct close to the train station and bus services. • Proximity to community services or other resources that people can access. • Site location is crucial as tenants have no cars. • Walkability saves commuting time. |
| Accessibility to employment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car parking space paramount in higher density living drop off/collection point. • Access to shops, transport and walk to work. • Car parking essential for support services (e.g. Blue Care and maintenance workers). |
| Precinct accessibility | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable, accessible ground plane and public spaces (e.g. not around the back). • Close to health facilities, social support (e.g. Visible Ink, Heart for Housing, Salvation Army). • Free inner city transport of assistance. • Accessibility important in terms of choice of land. |
| Equitable access | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equitable, clear and obvious access – incl. beyond wheelchair to hearing and sight loss. • Specialist Disability Accommodation options via NDIS needs more clarity. • Disability and support services access a must incl. parking (always an issue). • Accessible housing options still problematic. • Universal design in terms of access and surrounds important. |
| Visitability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual lifts access important. • Access to public transport really important. • Access requirements important for visitors too. • Struggle to calibrate proportion of accessible housing. |



Some stakeholder insights – social economic & environmental value

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| Whole life benefits | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole of life assessment in business case important - especially in mixed-use development. • Easier if asset owner retains in the long term. • Lead by demonstration - build own and manage the long-term needs – in it for the long game so demonstrate benefit. • Everyone knows it's more costly to retrofit - what's the upfront cost versus adapting homes? • There will be different value equations for different projects. The kind of value to be derived will vary significantly between different stakeholder groups. |
| Balancing upfront costs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healthier environment, healthy people and takes the burden off the system over time. • Engaging epidemiologists to show direct correlation and financial return between health and urban outcomes. • Cost-benefit analysis hard for discrete infrastructure with benefit over 30 year. • Difference in returns on managed investment between residential and industrial/retail /commercial becomes a disincentive to invest. • Land tax is a disincentive on build-to-rent assets. • Unlock underutilized government land for social and affordable housing outcomes. |
| Social and economic participation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to account for the social benefit and economic participation. |
| Long-term sustainability | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Floor space on lower levels for commercially gain to help balance cost of housing above. • Can't and wouldn't charge more for accessible units. • For not-for-profit organizations a big challenge is money: to grant capital, in the housing market in general, free capital for infrastructure is generated through debt. The creation of a fund would help not-for-profits to scale up and plan mid-term more effectively, rather than funding projects on a case by case. • Issues with building vitality if not occupied. |



Some stakeholder insights – regulatory & policy integration

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| Regulatory and policy issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continued advocacy needed for social and affordable housing to accessible standard.• Difficult in terms of how to fund regulations and operationalise these things - depends on how we value this, and on equation around jobs, growth and longer-term issues.• Political cycles can present a good opportunity in terms of funding mechanisms and how to localise.• Synergies between the local level and federal funding important.• Negotiated with fire authorities for liveability outcomes such as internal street, hanging gardens and natural ventilation. Not reflected in future regulations.• Interaction with national regulations via Australian Building Code and National Construction Code. |
| Whole of life business case | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Government agencies provide need to provide advice at the earliest opportunity rather than at the business case stage.• Easier when asset owner has longer time perspective.• The more diversity we can introduce into the community, the better outcomes for everyone. |
| Key priority areas | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• NDIS and SDA problematic and needs clarification – investment linked with independent living options.• For public housing now need to be in priority cohorts. This in turn affects eligibility for CHPs.• Conflict between town planning requirements and the state development code. |



Some stakeholder insights – improving adoption

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| Barriers related to mixed tenure | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not being a part of CBD mixed tenure. • Struggle with mixed tenure in leasing or selling commercial and retail space. |
| Economic barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivering accessibility in terms of a broader issue of liveability e.g. spending money on common outdoor spaces. • Financial hardship for affordable housing residents on low incomes • Access to Wi-Fi - residents don't have disposable cash. • Next level of sustainable affordability - whole of life perspective e.g. adopting technological advancement - require more capital investments to become affordable |
| Regulatory barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fire regulations and creation of internal streets e.g. negotiating on project by project basis. • Development codes and train lines e.g. heavy glazing. • Deem to comply do not satisfy the needs and makes it difficult to achieve good outcome. • Management plans rather than prescription. |
| Lack of evidence and tools to aid decision making | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sufficient tools to aid decision-making. • Invisibility in the budget of accessibility and liveability features. • Best practice examples can help change lifestyles and orient consumers towards investment |
| Attitudinal and behavioural barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People don't want to think that regulatory authority can dictate what your house looks like. Resistance to features unless you need them. • Anti-social behaviour. • Lack of willingness to pay upfront for intangible or long term benefits. • Some cohorts want more access to low set housing. |
| Market uptake barriers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing development opportunity and suitable sites. • High physical support commonly funded part of someone's NDIS package • General awareness amongst plan designers of NDIS SDA. • If you want modifications to be useful and helpful, they need to be tailored to the needs of the individual. • Unless quantifiable then accessibility is not included in the equation. |

QUALITY OF LIFE

Liveability – place-based & community-focused

Physical & virtual infrastructure
Community & culture
Environment & sustainability
Governance

Accessibility – person-centered & community-focused

Physical services & infrastructure
Individual & social services
Economic systems

LIVEABILITY FRAMEWORK

*For medium and higher
density housing
precincts*

EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

Social, environmental and economic value – building the value equation

Whole-of-life
Balancing economic equation
Building social value

ENABLING ENVIRONMENT

Improving adoption

Known barriers
Improving adoption

Regulatory and policy environment

Existing environment
Forward-looking & aspirational



Liveability framework elements page 1 of 3

Liveability – place based & community focused

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| Physical and virtual infrastructure | Physical connectedness to social infrastructure |
| | Virtual connectedness |
| | Asset maintenance |
| | Healthy by design |
| | Safety by design / safety awareness (addressing anti-social behaviours) |
| | Future proofing |
| Community and culture | Integrated and inclusive place-based planning |
| | Community, character and culture. |
| | Community and social wellbeing |
| | Community in mixed tenure environments |
| | Social connectedness |
| Environment & sustainability | Carbon neutral-positive approach |
| | Climate resilience |
| | Connectivity to nature-loving & biodiverse spaces |
| Governance | Addressing overcrowding |
| | Equality and equity |
| | Pandemic responsiveness |
| | Collaboration |
| | Cohort appropriate environment/community |



Accessibility – person centred & community focussed

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| Physical services & infrastructure | Whole of life accessibility |
| | Precinct safety |
| | Precinct accessibility |
| | Integrated service provision |
| | Access to vital services |
| Individual & social services | Walkability |
| | Universal design / equitable access |
| | Visitability |
| | Simple, intuitive and perceptible elements |
| | Local shared mobility |
| Economic systems | Tracking accessible housing in marketplace |
| | Accessibility to employment |
| | Spaces for learning and working |

Social , environmental and economic value – building the value equation

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|------------------------------------|---|
| Whole of life | Whole of life accessibility |
| | Balancing upfront cost with long term benefits |
| | Property diversity |
| | Asset maintenance |
| Balancing economic equation | Value capture |
| | Property affordability |
| | Composite return on investment |
| Building social value | Economic stimuli for local community |
| | Improving social and economic participation – creating demand |



Regulatory and policy environment

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|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Existing environment | National regulatory and policy issues |
| | State regulatory and policy issues |
| | Local regulatory and policy issues |
| Forward looking / aspirational | Managing jurisdictional conflicts |
| | Enabling diversity of outcomes |
| | Evidence for continuous improvement |

Improving adoption

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|---------------------------|--|
| Known barriers | Barriers to uptake of liveability features |
| | Barriers to uptake of accessibility features |
| | Economic barriers |
| | Attitudinal and behavioural barriers |
| Improving adoption | Adoption levers and market update |
| | Building mixed tenure environments |



Liveability Framework Checklist

- The framework and checklist can be modified for use in several ways e.g.
 - early in the project development
 - to communicate intent to a design team
 - as a completed project appraisal tool to close the loop on project-based learnings.
- Not all the five elements may be relevant for the specific project at a point in time, with relevance to be identified, for example, by the project team or client.
- Organisations are encouraged to take this framework and make it their own through aligning it with their internal systems and processes.
- The checklist is to be read in conjunction with our research findings included in the Final Industry Report, YouTube video and review of literature which *will* be available at: <https://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-71/>

Checklist attached to the appointment at [SBEnrc-1.71-Liveability-Framework-Checklist-Final-200921.pdf](#)



Current SBEnc research – Project 1.81 Developing a social and affordable housing investment tool

This project will address non-traditional delivery including mixed-tenure and mixed-use opportunities, and to integrate with market facing development opportunities of scale.

The tool will:

- draw upon previous SBEnc research to operationalise past research outcomes
- engage with state housing agencies, Treasury and industry
- identify and measure co-benefits across a number of selected developments
- be responsive to both person and place
- address medium and higher density urban housing case studies to test and develop the investment tool

Questions and Discussion

Liveable social and affordable higher density housing:
<https://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-71/>

Mapping the social and affordable housing network:
<http://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-61/>

Procuring Social and Affordable Housing:
<http://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-54/>

Valuing Social Housing:
<https://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-41/>

Rethinking Social Housing:
<http://sbenrc.com.au/research-programs/1-31/>

THANK YOU

s.reid@griffith.edu.au

j.kraatz@griffith.edu.au