

Creating liveable and accessible social and affordable homes

Escalating housing prices, job insecurity and economic uncertainty are pushing everyday Australian's to the limit. In the last year there has been a significant increase in individuals and families seeking social housing. High levels of demand for social and affordable housing options is placing significant pressure on governments and private housing organisations to supply appropriate housing solutions. Researchers from the [Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre](#) (SBEnc) at Griffith University have been investigating how the liveability and accessibility of medium to high density urban housing and precincts in our cities can deliver social and affordable housing.

Associate Professor Sacha Reid and her team have been developing a [*Liveability Framework for Medium to High-density Social and Affordable Housing*](#), to be used to develop project and precinct-based, value-focussed standards and targets to drive adoption of better outcomes and promote community acceptance of delivering whole-of-life solutions. Ensuring liveability and accessibility in medium to high density urban housing and precincts in our cities is critical to maximise investment and minimise future risks to our community. Increasing demand for housing is pushing social housing up, not out with a clearer focus on delivering medium and high density housing in urban areas.

The liveability framework is informed by relevant industry and academic guidelines and literature, and a number of case studies, one in Perth, Western Australia (conducted by Curtin University research partners) and the second in Brisbane, Queensland (QLD). Key research focus areas include:

- Identifying social and cultural value and how to maximise the potential of medium to high density urban precinct developments. This will investigate how to minimise potential issues and risks associated with higher density mixed tenancy developments.
- Identifying economic value will extend previous outcomes from the SBEnc Valuing Social Housing project to identify how: (i) the additional value of providing liveable design outcomes can be potentially captured; and (ii) upfront costs of liveability features can be balanced through whole-of-life benefits to justify investment for developers and the community.
- Building an understanding of governments' roles in relation to driving new urban forms around next level liveability issues and outcomes for higher density urban precincts.
- Understanding uptake of and barriers to the adoption to better ensure universal access, and the need to go beyond minimum standards, especially for vulnerable cohorts.

Research outcomes will include: liveability criteria targeting the delivery of social and affordable higher density urban housing and precincts responsive to both person and place; better understanding how upfront costs for specified liveability features can be balanced through whole-of-life benefits to justify investment; and highlight liveable design features with potential benefits at no or minimum construction cost to increase mid to long term benefits. The intent is that these deliverables (available in October 2021) will be used by SBEnrc core partners and project affiliates, and the social and affordable housing sector generally, to guide decision-making around the design and development of more effective social and affordable higher density housing. This is particularly pertinent in Queensland with the recent budget released in 15th June committing over \$1.9 billion to social and affordable housing and associated support programs over the next four years, and the establishment of a Housing Infrastructure Fund recognising the need for an on-going commitment to housing in this State.

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About the SBEnrc

The Sustainable Built Environment National Research Centre (SBEnrc) is the successor to the CRC for Construction Innovation. Established on 1 January 2010, the SBEnrc is a key research broker between industry, government and research organisations servicing the built environment industry. SBEnrc partners include: BGC Australia, Government of Western Australia, Queensland Government, Curtin University, Griffith University, RMIT University and Western Sydney University.

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