PSG#2 - P1.11. 3 Scalable Retrofit Strategies for Social Housing Portfolios

Date: Monday 10th August 2026

Time: 09.30am – 11am AWST

Attendance:

- Julie Saunders (Community Housing Industry Association Queensland) - Meeting Chair
- Ray Maher (The University of Queensland) – Project Lead
- Paul Matthew (The University of Queensland)
- Paola Leardini (The University of Queensland)
- Karim Yngstrom (Atlas Precast)
- Adrian Dawson (Transport for NSW)
- Mohamad (Mo) Fajajo (Transport for NSW)
- Alex Meek (WA Dept of Housing and Works)
- Rainie Zhang (WA Dept of Housing and Works)
- Jenella Voitkevich (Main Roads Western Australia)
- Karen Yesertener (Main Roads Western Australia)
- Peter Nelson (QLD Dept of Housing and Public Works)
- Peter Vanderaa (QLD Treasury)
- John Clifton (DevelopmentWA)
- Elaina Lobendahn (Defence Housing Australia)
- Aaron Sice (Housing Industry Association)
- Alexander Mitchel (Homes NSW)
- Henrik Meltesen (Ecopex Group)
- Will Hackney (SBEnrc)
- Grace Martini (SBEnrc)
- Adriana Sanchez (SBEnrc)

Notes

Introductions and Partner Updates: Julie Saunders facilitated introductions from all attending organisations, including new representatives such as Adriana from SBEnrc and Elaina from Defence Housing Australia, with participants sharing portfolio sizes, interests, and current challenges in sustainable housing.

Project Objectives and Research Team Structure: Ray Maher outlined the five core objectives of the scalable retrofit strategies project, introduced new research team members, and explained the roles of Paul Matthew, Paola Leardini, Vivian Tam, and Xihong Zhang in delivering the research.

Portfolio Analysis and Case Study Selection: Paul Matthew presented initial findings from ABS data on social and employer-provided housing, discussed the mapping of dwelling types and climate zones, and sought partner feedback on case study selection to maximise scalability and relevance.

ABS Data Analysis: Paul Matthew used ABS 2021 Census data to map 467,000 dwellings provided by government, community housing providers, and employers, identifying that 75% of social housing is detached or terrace houses, with employer-provided housing more common in regional areas.

Climate Zone Mapping: The analysis showed that the largest concentrations of detached and terrace housing are in Climate Zone 5 (Perth, Sydney) and Climate Zone 2 (SEQ), informing the selection of case studies for maximum scalability.

Case Study Selection Criteria: Paul Matthew proposed focusing on detached and terrace houses in key climate zones, with the potential to cover up to 168,000 dwellings, and invited partners to provide detailed portfolio data to refine case study selection.

Partner Feedback on Case Studies: Participants discussed the need to consider age of stock, regional representation, and challenging dwelling types, with suggestions to include high-rise and mid-rise buildings where relevant and to balance statistical significance with practical pain points.

Retrofit Challenges and Implementation Risks: Aaron Sice and other participants raised concerns about the practical challenges of retrofitting older housing stock, including compliance with modern codes, condensation and mould risks, and the need for holistic quality standards in retrofit interventions.

Building Code Compliance: Aaron Sice highlighted that the National Construction Code primarily applies to new buildings, and retrofitting older homes often triggers additional compliance requirements, making some interventions impractical.

Condensation and Mould Risks: Aaron Sice explained that improper insulation retrofits can lead to condensation and black mould, emphasising the importance of considering building physics and holistic solutions rather than isolated upgrades.

International Examples: Julie Saunders referenced the Scottish experience, where piecemeal retrofits led to unintended consequences, reinforcing the need for integrated quality standards and risk assessment in retrofit programmes.

Research Approach to Risks: Paola Leardini confirmed that the project's modelling will include risk assessments for mould, condensation, and other impacts, aiming to ensure retrofit interventions are safe and effective.

Data Requests and Partner Engagement: Ray Maher and the research team requested detailed portfolio and building-level data from partners, outlined confidentiality considerations, and planned follow-up meetings to support case study selection and research rigour.

Portfolio Data Needs: The research team requested information on dwelling types, locations, construction materials, standard plans, and challenging dwelling types to inform the analysis and case study selection.

Building-Level Data: Ideal data includes architectural drawings, construction details, building systems, maintenance records, and energy use, but the team is prepared to work with whatever information partners can provide.

Confidentiality and Collaboration: Ray Maher assured partners that all data sharing would respect confidentiality and that individual meetings would be arranged to discuss portfolio details and challenges.

Project Governance, Milestones, and Next Steps: Will Hackney and Julie Saunders confirmed the achievement of project milestones, including the quarterly report and literature review, and outlined next steps for case study determination, future meetings, and ongoing partner engagement.

Actions

1. **Portfolio Data Collection:** Arrange follow-up discussions with each partner to obtain detailed portfolio-level information, including building age, construction type, and location, to inform case study selection and research modelling. (Ray Maher, Paul Matthew)
2. **Case Study Determination:** Confirm and communicate the selected case studies and their focus areas to all core partners prior to Project Steering Group 3 to ensure clarity and alignment. (Ray Maher, Paul Matthew)
3. **PSG Meeting Invitations:** Send calendar invites for all upcoming Project Steering Group meetings with PDF attachments included for ease of access. (Adriana Sanchez)
4. **Communication Channels Identification:** Add the Australian Community Housing conference and relevant community housing provider newsletters to the project communications matrix and invite further suggestions via email. (Ray Maher, Will Hackney)
5. **BHC PSG Membership Approval:** Formalise Brisbane Housing Corporation's participation as a guest in PSG meetings, pending no objections from members, to contribute portfolio-level data. (Julie Saunders, Will Hackney)
6. **Payment Milestone Confirmation:** Release the payment milestone for the research team based on the completion of the literature review and quarterly report, as supported by the PSG. (Will Hackney)