

SUMMARY OF CONSULTATION

Academics from the Australian National University and University of Canberra

Date of consultation:	5 September 2017
Group consulted with:	Academics
Number of attendees:	11
Name of organisations:	Canberra Urban and Regional Futures, The Australian National University, and the University of Canberra - NATSEM

Key themes arising from the consultation

- Housing type changes are required to ensure there is an equal and equitable spread of public, social and affordable housing through the ACT – this means infill or Brownfield developments as well as within new suburbs.
- Home purchase is falling for many young Australians and this may have more to do with lifestyle choices than about house prices – more work may need to be done in this space.
- Affordable housing links strongly with the amenity of a place – such as access to services such as emergency/health, schools, transport, open space and social networks.

Key quotes

- “Housing stress appears (statistically) lower in the ACT when compared to other cities, and serious issues seem less prevalent due to the higher than average incomes.”
- “Increasing population in the ACT means the form of the City will inevitably change.”
- “We need to consider the mobility and fluidity of the current workforce noting that changes in employment and lifestyles will influence personal choice when it comes to renting or home purchase. A focus group for young people to understand why home ownership is dropping in this cohort would be a good idea.”

What is working well?

- Market doesn't appear to be undersupplied, especially for multi-unit housing.
- Past 10 years have shown improvements in rental price growth.
- Federal level interventions will assist ACT to deal with affordability issues.
- Phase out of stamp duty.
- Vacancy tax.
- Peppering of public housing builds social inclusion but may mask disadvantage.
- Public housing stock in Canberra is proportionally the highest in Australia.
- Common Ground is nice – close to shops, other services, churches (provide a food pantry) – strategies are important when looking at extreme levels of housing stress.

What could be improved?

- Low rent growth compared to other jurisdictions – rental price levels are high though.
- Rates have increased - as predicted - stamp duty has decreased - will not make housing affordable.
- Looking at homeless data – ACT has a high rate of homelessness – 50 people per 10,000 head of population - only NT is higher.
- Homeless people need access to services – when you move public housing tenants think about moving support services as well.
- Where are young (non-drivers) and older people located with respect to services? The location of services is key.
- Issues with Nimbyism – it is a real problem.
- Restricting the sale of affordable housing to people on an affordable income is unlikely to have any impact on the affordable housing market – it would be better to focus efforts on affordable renters.

New ideas

- Need to think outside the box - Radical Cities.
- More urban density, along transport corridors – less expansion – we do not have the land to keep going out so there is a need for more brownfield developments in the inner part of the city.
- Need to shift away from the quarter acre block – achieving higher levels of multi-unit dwellings than was considered in the past.
- Need to have wrap around services where public housing is located – move them to where people live or move people to the services e.g. Common Ground.

- Use the Residential Tenancies Act to get people to move into housing that better suits their needs – however forcing people to move is not ideal.
- Home Ground Real Estate agency – we need Treasury support for incentives. Havelock Housing has looked into the model, but we need an investor who would be willing to use the house for that purpose. This was a model used by Launch Housing to encourage philanthropic investors. Case management is provided by the community organisation.