



In June 2021 the UTAS Housing and Community Research Unit, University of Tasmania released, The Tasmanian housing market: Update 2020-21

Changes in current demand and growth projections for our future needs.

The need for social housing remains high, as does need for assistance from Specialist Homelessness Services. This indicates that despite new government investment in the social housing and crisis housing systems, demand still far exceeds the available supply, but our leaders knew this projection well.

In Australia, the responsibility for housing policy is shared across all three levels of government. To be effective, national, state, and local governments need to coordinate their housing-related activities effectively, and this does not always occur. As a result, there are multiple points of tension and contradiction within the Australian housing system... and they all point the finger from their comfortable well-serviced mansions.

Commonwealth government taxation policy, including in relation to negative gearing and capital gains tax exemptions, encourages the provision of a very limited new housing supply, but also contributes to speculative investment and consequent house price inflation (Eccleston et al. 2018a). These in turn create significant housing market pressures at the state level, yet it is difficult for state governments to fully resolve these because they lack the Commonwealth's revenue-raising power. That's because they haven't bothered advocating for it 'hard' enough... aka doing their job well at all!

The Tasmanian state government could not deliver the currently needed 14,200 new dwellings without substantial funding support from the Commonwealth and significant private investment in affordable housing. As this funding is not forthcoming (see above), Tasmanian government efforts towards this are still inward focused (career driven politics) therefore very limited. The Tasmanian government has though committed to building a measly 3,500 social housing dwellings over the next four years, as well as constructing additional supported accommodation for target groups (Tasmanian Liberals 2021).

However, this more-than welcome investment is accompanied by other policies, such as a substantial increase to the First Home Owners Grant Boost; although restricted to new supply, eligibility for this program is not means tested and the investment is likely to be capitalised by the rich and promote increased prices with little long-term impact on affordability. Additional market factors include popularity, classification of state (rural/regional), air b&b as well as social indicators that also impact.

TAS Housing market FACTS;

By March 2021, Hobart dwelling values had increased 12.5% in 12 months, and by 3.3% in the previous month alone. Dwelling values across the rest of Tasmania also increased by 15.3% and 2.3% respectively.

New loan commitments increased by 11.5% to \$307.5 million in the December quarter of 2020 alone. By February 2021, loan commitments to owner-occupiers had reached \$334.6 million. Loan commitments to investors had increased by 51.8% to \$98.5 million in the December quarter of 2020. Loan commitments to first home buyers rose 85.2% over 12 months to October 2019. By October 2020 were at their highest level since their post-GFC peak in 2009.

Only 23% of loans to owner-occupiers are to construct new dwellings or purchase newly built dwellings. This is, however, a higher proportion than previously - which makes sense as we are rapidly growing in population.

In March 2021, the median rent in Tasmania was \$400 per week for a three-bedroom house, that's up 6.7% since March 2020. The median rent for a two-bedroom unit was \$360, up 20% since March 2020.

The private rental market vacancy rate was 1.9% in March 2021, many of these homes are still empty - go figure.

According to the 2020 Rental Affordability Index, Greater Hobart remained the least affordable capital city in Australia relative to income, and the rest of Tasmania is the least affordable region of the 'rest of state' areas considered.

Just for context;

Melbourne's median weekly asking rent over the 2017 December quarter was \$425 for houses and stayed the same for units at \$400.

In 2019 the asking rents for houses in Melbourne remained at a median \$430 per week, with apartments also staying steady at \$420 per week from 2018. The average rent in Melbourne per week is \$440 for houses and \$400 for units, according to a Domain rental report (September 2020).

Don't forget that Tasmanians don't usually have the wage or salary opportunities, nor services available to them as most interstate cities do.



MHFA

MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION AUSTRALIA

ONE LIFE SHOCK AWAY

NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH EVENT REPORT

HOBART TOWN HALL

13 OCTOBER 2020

WE ARE ALL JUST 'ONE LIFE SHOCK AWAY'

EVENT TITLE

**National Symposium on
Homelessness & Mental Health**

DATE

13th October 2020

LOCATION

Hobart Town Hall, Tasmania

TIME

10am - 2pm

AIM

**TO IMPROVE UPON THE NATIONAL COORDINATION
OF MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT IN AUSTRALIA**

**TO STRENGTHEN THE SERVICE RESPONSE TO
PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS OR AT RISK OF
HOMELESSNESS, SPECIFICALLY IN RELATION TO
MENTAL HEALTH**

**JOIN US IN TAKING STEPS
TOWARDS BETTER
MENTAL HEALTH**



AUSTRALIA'S FIRST NATIONAL MENTAL HEALTH DAILY

OBJECTIVES

CONNECT AND INVOLVE SECTOR LEADERS IN A MEANINGFUL OPPORTUNITY TO EXPLORE LOCAL ISSUES RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

RAISE AND DISCUSS CURRENT KEY ISSUES AND SPECIFIC CHALLENGES SURROUNDING HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

PROVIDE FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENTS REGARDING HOMELESSNESS & MENTAL HEALTH

The purpose of this event was to provide a facilitated opportunity for Tasmanians to connect in order to better understand the issues surrounding homelessness, and the direct connection to mental health.

Hobart is currently experiencing a homelessness rate with a relevant ratio higher than that of the state's population growth. The connection between mental health challenges and homelessness is becoming more grossly obvious, yet the service delivery, often found to be duplicated, is not yet effectively coordinated or utilised well enough to achieve meaningful outcomes for the individuals experiencing these issues.

We aimed to gather grassroots feedback from both our community and the experts within their fields, facilitate robust discussions and consider this information meaningfully in relevance when developing report recommendations relating to these areas.

Mental Health SYMPOSIUM

National Symposium on Homelessness and Mental Health

13 October 2020

10 am – 2 pm

Hobart Town Hall

AGENDA

One Life Shock Away

- 10am** Registration, Network with Speakers & Submit Questions + Light Refreshments
- 10:20am** Welcome and Intro – Event MC Kelly Sims; *MHFA Tas Project Officer & Tas Ambassador*
- 10:27am** Open Event - Hobart as MHFA Host + Journey Cr Jax Ewin: *Hobart City Councillor*
- 10:35am** Special Guest - Fed Minister for Housing Michael Sukkar (*via video due to restrictions TBC*)
- 10:40am** Sponsors/Volunteers - Commonwealth Bank Australia
- 10:50am** Award Presentation + MHFA Video
- 11am** *10 min Break - Toilet, Networking & Refreshments + Q/A*
- 11:10am** Speaker 1 - Catherine Robinson - *Social Action & Research Centre, Anglicare Tasmania + Guest OH*
- 11:25am** Speaker 2 - Tanya Hunt - *CEO Youth Network Of Tasmania & State Youth Advocate*
- 11:35am** *Stand and shake a leg - Promote principles of physically moving regularly and facebook challenge*
- 11:36am** Speaker 3 - Keith Jacobs - *UTAS Professor, Research Director in Housing Policy*
- 11:45am** Speaker 4 - Connie Digolis - *CEO Mental Health Council Tasmania*
- 11:50am** Speaker 5 - Rosalie Martin - *Aus of the Year Tas, Founder of Connect 42 (Chatter Matters)*
- 12pm** *Lunch - Toilet/Network/MH facilitated activity (city walk)*
- 12:30pm** Speaker 6 - Brett Geeves - *Sports Coordinator Reclink Australia*
- 12:35pm** Speaker 7 - Don Mccrae - *Salvation Army & Community Advocate*
- 12:40pm** Speaker 8 - Darran Petty - *Media Personality & Podcaster*
- 12:45pm** Speaker 9 - John Stubley - *CEO Hobart City Mission*
- 12:50pm** *Break - toilet, networking & refreshments (encourage networking with facilitation)*
- 1pm** **Panel - Moderated by Kelly Sims**
- **Greg Barns** (Social Justice Barrister)
 - **Meg Webb** (Independent Politician)
 - **Jax Ewin** (HCC Councillor)
 - **Catherine Robinson** (SBS & Anglicare Researcher)
 - **John Stubley** (Hobart City Mission)
 - **Connie Digolis** (MHCT CEO)
 - **Don Mccrae** (Salvos)
- 1:50pm** Summary and Vote of Thanks - Kelly Sims
- 2:00 pm** Closing of Event



DIGNITARIES WHO ATTENDED

PLEASE NOTE THAT IT WAS A PARLIAMENTARY SITTING DAY

Senator the Hon Sarah Henderson

Minister the Hon Meg Webb

Councillor Jax Ewin

Lisa Burnett on behalf of Minister the Hon Elise Archer

TOTAL NUMBER OF **SPEAKERS** **PANEL** **BOTH**

Kelly Sims

Tas Project Officer & Event Organiser - MHFA (Local Councillor - GCC)

Jax Ewin

Local Councillor - Hobart City Council

Catherine Robinson

Researcher & SBS Host - Filthy Rich & Homeless: *Anglicare*

Tanya Hunt

CEO - *Youth Network Of Tasmania*

Keith Jacobs

Director - *UTAS Housing Research (Professor)*

Connie Digolis

CEO - *Mental Health Council Tasmania*

Rosalie Martin

CEO/Founder - *Connect 42 (Chatter Matters)*

H' Sarah Henderson

Senator of Victoria - Liberal Party (current government)

Brett Geeves

Aus Cricketer, Media Personality & Prof Dev - *Reclink Australia*

Don Mccrae

Program Manger - *Salvation Army & Community Advocate*

Darran Petty

Youth Martial Arts Trainer - *Media Personality & Podcaster*

John Stublely

CEO - *Hobart City Mission*

Greg Barns

Politician & Social Justice Barrister - Own chambers (Wikileaks)

Meg Webb

Independent Politician - *Member for Nelson & Community Advocate*



TOTAL NUMBER OF ATTENDEES

66 people in total attended this event, predominately service sector leaders, advocates & professionals. It is difficult to capture all representation as many contribute to a wide range of areas & hold several positions at varying levels. The following information was provided and documented as attending:

UTAS

Mental Health Council Tasmania
Tasmanian Health Service
The Department of Education
The Association for Children with Disability
Relationships Tasmania
Connect 42 (formerly Chatter Matters)
Hobart City Mission
Colony 47
Relink Australia
Bethlehem House
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Youth Network of Tasmania
Communities Tas
Mission Australia
Salvation Army
Baptcare
Brave Foundation
Tasmanian Legislative Council
Tasmanian Liberal Party
Glenorchy City Council
Hobart City Council
Clarence City Council
Rosny College
Elizabeth College
Clarence High School
Bellerive Primary School
News Corp
Glenorchy Football Club
MONA Museum
Research and Technical Consultancy Firms
Community Members

SPONSORS



Mental Health
Foundation Australia

NATIONAL

Mental Health Foundation Australia



Australian Unity

Commonwealth Bank Australia



TASMANIAN EVENTS

Commonwealth Bank Australia - Tasmania

Woolworths - Tasmania



Scene Change

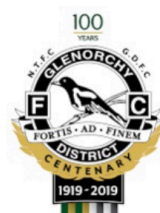
Glenorchy Football Club

ST. Cred Skincare



CommonwealthBank

Alistair Bett Photography



OUTCOME

This symposium was facilitated in two parts and was broadcasted live on the day, it is available to view via filmed footage.

<HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/WATCH/LIVE/?V=834487720623011&REF=SEARCH>

The first was a succession of key presenters aimed to share core messages and prompt discussion in regards to issues surrounding homelessness, particularly in relation to mental health. The participants were presented with short and robust talks delivered by sector leaders, which explored the biggest challenges in their field of work and ideas for solutions.

The second component of the day was a facilitated Panel Discussion, which empowered attendees to actively participate by submitting and asking questions. It explored the current situation, available supports & services, as well as challenged current practices and professional conduct. The day was formatted to highlight the importance of professional collaboration and why we should be taking a more integrated, streamlined, evidence-based best-practice & *collective* approach to addressing homelessness and mental health in this state.

The supported networking breaks were strategically formatted to provide participants with the opportunity to honestly discuss relevant issues connected with homelessness & mental health.



FUTURE RECOMMENDATIONS

WHAT CAN BE DONE TO IMPROVE THESE SERVICES, IN THE HOPE OF MINIMISING THE ISSUE INTO THE FUTURE

Recognise and review current commitment to addressing the lack of affordable housing issue, by accurately reporting on its links to the rapidly increasing homelessness & mental health challenges in Tasmania

Acknowledge the overall short term nature of funding agreements and service provision that currently drives the limited workforce security, capacity & service delivery trends

Secure & Promote a national mental health coordination role to develop a strategy with key targets that led by evidence-based best-practice research, and supports the overall improvement of service provision *while focusing* on a more holistic, collective & streamlined approach statewide

Address community perception, service delivery gaps/duplication and reassess the actions aimed to meet statewide KPI'S & national goals in relation to homelessness and mental health.

BETTER RECOGNISE THE INTENT BEHIND ALL HUMAN RIGHTS AND COMMON VALUES LEGISLATION & RAISE THE STANDARD OF EXPECTATION FOR ETHICAL PRACTICE RELATING TO HOMELESSNESS AND MENTAL HEALTH

FOCUS ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMON CAUSES & CHALLENGES SUCH AS;

Accessibility to Support Services

Mental & Physical Health

Individual Finances

Society & Culture

Environment

Economy

Medical