



**Kate Chaney MP** FEDERAL MEMBER  
FOR CURTIN

# Curtin Housing Forums Summary Report

**Kate Chaney MP**  
**Federal Member for Curtin**

December 2023

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
Community Engagement Process .....	4
Curtin’s Priority Housing Issues and Goals .....	5
Overarching Themes in Housing Reform .....	5
Treat housing as a home not than an asset .....	5
Do higher density housing well .....	5
Improve access to land .....	6
Co-operate better between branches of government .....	6
Federal Government Asks .....	7
Incentivise Build to Rent .....	7
Tax vacant dwellings .....	7
Review negative gearing .....	7
Prioritise key trades in immigration .....	7
Avoid buyer grants .....	8
State Government Asks .....	8
Unlock Federal funding for social and affordable housing .....	8
Replace stamp duty with land tax .....	8
Strengthen renters’ rights .....	8
Accelerate approval processes .....	8
Require a percentage of social/affordable housing in new developments .....	8
Require sustainable construction standards .....	9
Local Government Asks .....	9
Simplify planning rules .....	9
Play an active role in development .....	9
Enforce short stay accommodation rules .....	9
Annexure 1 – Key Housing Data .....	10
Notes .....	10
Annexure 2 – Housing Forum Two: Expert Panel .....	11

## Introduction

Australia has a housing affordability crisis.

This crisis has been a long time coming and it is evident that the housing policies of the major parties have not been effective in reducing this problem. Housing is a key cost of living indicator and housing affordability is a matter affecting all generations of Curtin residents.

Housing outcomes are a key component of the intergenerational divide. Young people often tell me it is almost impossible to buy a house or afford to rent without relying on the 'Bank of Mum and Dad', especially in or around the Curtin electorate.

The Curtin community is diverse including renters, mortgage holders and owners from Scarborough and Innaloo in the north, to Mosman Park in the south, and West Leederville and Glendalough in the east.

As a community independent I aim to do politics differently, by listening to the community rather than party or vested interests. This includes the freedom to engage with my community to identify and test policy priorities.

In 2023, I have consulted my community on housing policy priorities and ideas, by holding community forums and conducting online surveys. I thank every constituent who has contributed to this process and to our expert panel for being generous with their time.

This Summary Report is a product of my community engagement on this issue.



**Kate Chaney MP**

Federal Member for Curtin

## Community Engagement Process

I conducted two Community Housing Forums, attended by a total of 180 Curtin constituents.

Housing Forum One in October 2023 was about listening to a mix of renters, homeowners and mortgage holders from across the Curtin community. This group identified the top three issues and top three goals for housing in Curtin.

These priorities were surprisingly consistent with the 100 responses to my Housing Survey, publicised on my website and in my quarterly newsletter.

After Housing Forum One, I asked for policy ideas to achieve these goals and received 60 emails in response. These ranged from straight-forward policy ideas to significant policy papers and suggestions.

Housing Forum Two in November 2023 involved a panel of experts evaluating these community policy solutions. We heard from Natalie Sangalli from Housing Choices Australia and Steven Rowley from Curtin University, who were then joined in a panel discussion by developer Rowan Clarke (of Hesperia) and architect Nic Brunsdon. Annexure 2 outlines the backgrounds of the Expert Panel members.

These experts assessed the potential impact of the community-generated policy ideas as well as assessing other proposed policy suggestions.

## Curtin's Priority Housing Issues and Goals

Through the community engagement process, participants identified our top three issues in housing as:

- lack of affordable housing to rent and buy;
- lack of diverse housing options; and
- a tax system with the wrong incentives.

Our top three long-term goals for housing were identified as:

- secure long-term housing achievable for all;
- policies to incentivise appropriate homes; and
- integration of social and affordable housing into communities.

## Overarching Themes in Housing Reform

Some of the reforms proposed require a shift in approach at all levels of government. These are themes that should be considered in all housing-related policy.

### Treat housing as a home not as an asset

The purpose of housing should be to provide homes rather than an investment product. The recognition of the social good of a home should underpin policy rather than a focus of a home as an investment asset.

### Do higher density housing well

We want walkable, liveable communities. In Curtin, there is a particular opportunity to incentivise owners (at smaller scale) and developers (at larger scale) to undertake sustainable climate-friendly infill. Curtin has desirable locations so medium-density infill done right can be a "sweet spot". Density should look more like Paris than the Gold Coast and can be focused near transport with good green space. Incentives or tax credits should be examined.

## Improve access to land

Existing land owned by government entities at all levels could be unlocked for new housing. Rezoning existing land would enable diverse housing options.

## Better cooperation between branches of government

Many aspects of the housing crisis need action from more than one branch of government. An overarching National Housing Policy would provide direction and a framework for governments to work together.

The following pages set out housing policy changes that each level of government could drive that would work together to address the housing goals identified by the Curtin community.

## Federal Government Asks

### Incentivise Build to Rent

We need a diversity of housing options. The Federal Government should incentivise industry to construct houses under the **Build to Rent** model, as well as new developments committing to a percentage of social and affordable housing. Incentives could include GST exemptions and/or land tax exemptions.

### Tax vacant dwellings

Houses need to be used as homes wherever possible. Owners should be encouraged to use their housing assets to provide homes, through imposing a tax on vacant dwellings.

### Review negative gearing

We should consider reducing the negative gearing tax deduction on subsequent properties or beyond a capped tax loss, other than if properties contribute to new supply. Any reforms should be structured to not negatively affect supply.

### Prioritise key trades in immigration

Immigration provides a net economic benefit to Australia. But, within the immigration intake debate, I would support:

- (a) setting a target for immigration, so housing policy can be developed accordingly;
- (b) promoting skilled worker migrants especially for key trades in property construction;
- (c) temporary limits on foreign purchases of residential property, as in Canada; and
- (d) examining the student intake program if a cut to immigration is necessary.

### Encourage down-sizing

Policies to encourage downsizing should be considered, such as a rent-a-room scheme where income may be exempt from tax.

## Avoid buyer grants

We should avoid additional grants or incentives for first home buyers, which drive up prices.

## State Government Asks

### Unlock Federal funding for social and affordable housing

The Western Australian Government should work closely with community service providers to support projects of significant scale to ensure Western Australia obtains its fair share of federal funding for social and affordable housing.

### Replace stamp duty with land tax

Stamp duty should be phased out in Western Australia and replaced with land tax. Giving property buyers an option to move to an annual land tax (as in some other States) would remove the barrier that stamp duty creates to downsizing and transactions generally.

### Strengthen renters' rights

Renters in Western Australia need greater protection to provide stability so that renting is a viable long term housing option. This could include limiting rent increases to once a year, no unjustifiable rent increases, ending no-fault evictions, minimum energy performance standards and disclosures for rentals, and tax incentives for landlords to replace gas appliances with more efficient electrical alternatives.

### Accelerate approval processes

There are no quick fixes for the housing crisis, but we need to make them as quick as possible. Approval times are one of the main barriers to project viability. Rewarding good design, or modular/stick frame homes with shorter approval processes could also incentivise the type of density we want in a timely way.

### Require a percentage of social/affordable housing in new developments

The best social and affordable housing is integrated into communities. Approvals could require developments to contain social and affordable housing mixed with market housing.



## Require sustainable construction standards

We should future-proof all new construction to reduce cost of living and emissions. New construction should be renewables ready (solar-ready roof, battery storage, EV charger), energy efficient, fully electric and use sustainable materials.

## Limit or tax short stay accommodation

The Western Australian Government should limit or tax short stay accommodation such as Airbnb similar to other Australian and international jurisdictions.

## Local Government Asks

### Simplify planning rules

Simplified planning rules could unlock 'YIMBYs' ('Yes, in my backyard') who are willing to develop tiny houses or renovated garages. Diverse housing options create interesting multi-generational communities.

### Play an active role in development

Local councils have an opportunity to develop the land they hold and play a role in finding innovative dual purposes for spaces.

### Enforce short stay accommodation rules

Many councils have rules to limit about short stay accommodation, but they are not enforced. Enforcing limits on short stay accommodation such as Air BnB would provide a short-term improvement in housing supply.

***Note: since the Housing Forums, the State and Federal Governments have proposed some initiatives consistent with policy ideas suggested during the Forum.***

## Annexure 1 – Key Housing Data

	<b>Curtin</b>	<b>Australia</b>
<b>People</b>	173,041	25,422,788
<b>Private dwellings (including visitor only and non-classified households)</b>	76,057 <sup>1</sup>	10,852,208 <sup>1</sup>
<b>Rental Percentage</b>	30.7% <sup>2</sup>	30.6%
<b>House owned outright</b>	34.5%	31.0%
<b>House owned with a mortgage</b>	31.6%	35.0%
<b>Social housing households</b>	3.4% for Western Australia	3.8% <sup>3</sup>
<b>Homelessness<sup>4</sup></b>	approx. 10,000 for Western Australia	
<b>Sleeping Rough<sup>5</sup></b>	approx. 2,000 for Western Australia	
<b>Median weekly household income</b>	\$2,308 <sup>6</sup>	\$1,746

*2021 ABS Census data is used other than for social housing data*

### Notes

1. Of Australian private dwellings, 72.3% are separate houses, 12.6% townhouses and 14.8% apartments. Of Curtin private dwellings, 58.4% are separate houses, 22.6% are townhouses and 18.8% are apartments. The current median house price in Curtin is \$1,360,500 with the Perth median house price being \$570,000.
2. In Curtin suburbs, the rental percentage ranges from 12.2% to 63.1%. The current rental vacancy rate in Perth is 0.7%. The current median weekly rent in Curtin is \$850 and in Perth is \$590.
3. In 2021, there were 351,017 social housing dwellings (state owned and managed public housing or community managed housing) in Australia, representing 3.8% of households. In 1981 social housing represented 4.9% of households.
4. "Homelessness" means living in insecure or inadequate housing, with no control over tenure, such as couch-surfing, overcrowded accommodation, and caravan parks.
5. "Sleeping rough" means living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping outside.

## Annexure 2 – Housing Forum Two: Expert Panel

- **Professor Steven Rowley.** Steven is a Professor of Property in the School of Accounting Economics and Finance at Curtin University. He is also a Director of, and helps lead, the significant Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute - Curtin Research Centre. Steven has 25 years' experience in housing affordability and supply.
- **Natalie Sangalli.** Natalie is Acting COO of Housing Choices Australia. Housing Choices is an independent, not-for-profit housing provider that delivers high quality, accessible and affordable housing for people on lower incomes and people with disability. Natalie has 20 plus years mission driven leadership experience across government, private and not-for-profit organisations.
- **Rowan Clarke.** Rowan is a Director of Hesperia, a Certified B Corporation business. Hesperia was formed from a coming together of 2 leading property developers, Linc Property and Fini Group. Hesperia works across all property sectors, including residential and public sector developments. Rowan has a broad range of skills within property, investment banking and business development including having worked at Goldman Sachs, Azure Capital and Wesfarmers. Rowan has a Bachelor of Commerce, an MBA from London Business School, he is a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia and has a Postgraduate Diploma in Applied Finance.
- **Nic Brunsdon.** Nic is a leading architect with a number of Western Australian, National awards and international awards. Nic Brunsdon Studio is a Certified B Corporation business. Nic has a passion for sustainable development. He previously worked as Director in charge of Design WA at the Department of Planning Lands and Heritage.