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# REVIVING THE GREAT AUSTRALIAN DREAM

Homeownership & Housing Security for All

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# UWA Public Policy Institute

## About Us

The UWA Public Policy Institute exists to proactively shape Western Australian and Australian policy landscapes, bridging research, expertise, and community insight to inform meaningful change. We aim to act as a conduit between researchers and thought leaders, policymakers, and Australian communities, to ensure that practical and evidence-based policy is implemented.

We envision a future in which public policy is deeply grounded in the real, lived experiences of our communities. Achieving this demands a practical commitment to developing informed, adaptive policies that respond to the unique challenges facing our regions. By championing innovation, fostering inclusivity, and building resilience, we aim to shape a policy landscape that honestly serves and empowers all Western Australians and Australians.

We act as a catalyst for policy innovation, championing forward-thinking solutions that are attuned to the evolving needs of both Western Australia and the broader national context. Through rigorous applied research, meaningful community engagement, and strategic policy development, we play a vital role in shaping responses that are locally grounded, nationally relevant, and globally informed.

## Our Team

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## **Interpreting and Realising the Great Australian Dream of Homeownership and a Vision of Housing Security**

Professor Paul Flatau

Centre for Social Impact, The University of Western Australia

### **Homes Fit for All**

In the depths of the Second World War, the Curtin Labor Government (1941-45), established the Australian Housing Commission under the auspices of Ben Chifley, Minister for Post-War Reconstruction.

The backdrop to this new government Commission?

The need for a massive boost in the Australian housing stock in order to address the "widespread deficiencies in quantity and quality of pre-war housing and the acuteness of the present shortage"<sup>1</sup>.

The stated goal of the Commission was housing for all:

*"... a dwelling of good standard and equipment is not only the need but the right of every citizen"<sup>2</sup>.*

The Australian Housing Commission set itself very ambitious yearly targets for affordable housing supply mainly for low-

income households during the post-war period.

Notably, the Australian Housing Commission was concerned not just with increasing the public housing stock (to which its name became attached) but also with increasing affordable housing in the private rental market and in homeownership for low-income households.

### **The Rise of the Great Australian Dream**

Fast forward to the 1970s and the term "the Great Australian Dream" becomes commonplace.

However, it is applied narrowly, only referring to homeownership. Lost is the broader goal of housing security for all Australians and across all housing tenures<sup>3</sup>.

The late Jim Kemeny noted way back in 1977, that the Great Australian Dream elevated homeownership as "inherently the most superior form of tenure". Moreover, when linked to the concept of 'a property-

<sup>1</sup> Hill, M.R. (1964) Housing—Twenty Years After. *The Australian Quarterly*, 36(3), 45-55. Ramsay, A. M. (1945). Housing problems. *The Australian Quarterly*, 17(4), 87-94.

<sup>2</sup> Hill, 1964, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> Apps, P. (1976). Home Ownership—The Australian Dream. *The Australian Quarterly*, 48(4), 64-75.

owning democracy’, homeownership had solidified itself as “the most powerful ideology in Australian social and political life”<sup>4</sup>.

Supported by generous tax breaks and other policy levers combined with rapid social mobility and changing aspirations, homeownership rates rose dramatically in the post-war period through to the 1960s, peaking at 73% in 1966. At the same time, public housing rates fell to 4.3% under the pressure applied by the Menzies Government (1949-66) to public housing. Homeownership rates at the national level hover around 67% today.

When viewed from a modern perspective, housing, irrespective of tenure, in the 1960s and 1970s was largely affordable and secure although it was recognised that much more still needed to be done<sup>5</sup>.

## **The Slow Demise of the Great Australia Dream?**

Fast forward from the 1970s to the present and there are clear signs that the Great Australian Dream of homeownership is slipping away for low-income Australian households. For example, the homeownership rate for those aged 25-55 is expected to fall significantly over the next 15 years<sup>6</sup>.

Why?

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<sup>4</sup> Kemeny, J. (1977) ‘A political sociology of home ownership in Australia’. *The Australian and New Zealand Journal of Sociology*, 13(1), 47-52.

<sup>5</sup> Gribbin, C., and Newton, P. (1979). Housing aspirations: some implications for welfare housing policy. Swinburne. Conference contribution. <https://doi.org/10.25916/sut.26293045.v1>.

<sup>6</sup> Burke, T., Nygaard C., Ralston L. (2020) Australian home ownership: past reflections, future directions, AHURI Final Report 328, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute Limited, Melbourne, <http://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/328>.

A combination of inter-related factors is at play here including an increasing gap between income and house prices growth, increased property investment, and family and household formation trends.

At the same time as homeownership aspirations have come under pressure, we have also witnessed continuing high homelessness rates, increasing real rents and an historical decline in private rental security of tenure. These trends are all emblematic of the diminution of the post-War consensus on housing security for all.

Policymakers, in effect, turned their backs on the wartime Australian Housing Commission’s vision of a dwelling of good standard as the right of every Australian citizen.

## **Resuscitating the Great Australian Dream and a Vision of Housing Security**

What then do we need to do to resuscitate the Great Australian Dream of homeownership and a vision of housing security?

A thumbnail sketch of several big ideas outlined below offer a pathway forward. These ideas need deep and sustained commitment from governments:

- **Establish Hard Housing Supply**

**Targets:** We need to revisit and take on the task that the Australian Housing Commission presented to the wartime government of setting clear targets to increase the Australian housing stock available to low-to-medium income households as this will have the benefit of putting downward pressure on housing prices and rents (provided that there are not corresponding measures that increase demand).

- **Enhanced Security of Tenure:**

Housing stability contributes to improved social and economic well-being, lower public expenditure (in the medium-to-long run), and enhanced productivity. Hence, we need to improve security of tenure, especially for those in the private rental market. Australia has relatively weak laws when it comes to the private rental market particularly in relation to requiring reasonable grounds for termination of leases and rent setting regulations when rents rise rapidly against the CPI.

- **Enhanced Supported Housing for Vulnerable Groups:**

Homelessness and vulnerability remains a perennial and growing policy challenge across metropolitan and regional Australia. The last time

there was a determined policy effort to address homelessness by the Commonwealth was under the Rudd Government when it came to power with its The Road Home program. Homelessness is a complex ‘wicked problem’ and as such it requires a co-ordinated policy response from the Commonwealth and State/Territory governments. Increasing the supply of social and affordable housing is but an initial step. Crucially, what is needed is supportive/supported housing for those (re)entering housing with long histories of homelessness and high health and other needs. Relatedly, targeted prevention and early intervention programs that are culturally safe and appropriate, are required to turn off the tap of (re-)entry into homelessness for vulnerable and marginalised groups such as young people, victims of domestic violence, and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders<sup>7</sup>.

## Conclusions

The Great Australian Dream remains the aspiration of most Australian households but is increasingly out of reach for younger people on low-to-middle incomes. Housing insecurity is now widespread for those without strong housing equity and some kind of wealth base.

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<sup>7</sup> Flatau et al., (2021) Ending homelessness in Australia: An evidence and policy deep dive. Perth: Centre for Social Impact, UWA/UNSW. <https://doi.org/10.25916/ntba-f006>

The vision of the wartime Australian Housing Commission of secure housing for all remains the policy objective we all should aspire to. The Australian Government has taken a number of measures to improve housing outcomes via: (i) the National Housing Accord; (ii) incentivising states to build more houses and support infrastructure development through the New Homes Bonus and the Housing Support Program; (iii) fostering improved planning and zoning; and, (iv) supporting skills development.

And, the Western Australian Government is doing its bit through significant new capital funding for social housing, albeit after a period of inaction.

Ultimately, greater political ambition and policy resourcing from federal and state governments of all persuasions is required and long overdue. A return to commitment and actions of the old Australian Housing Commission will pave the way for a fairer and more productive Australia.

## **Advocating for the Unthinkable: Opening the Window to Housing for All**

Tanya Steinbeck

CEO, Urban Development Institute of Australia (WA)

### **From Dream to Nightmare?**

For decades, the Great Australian Dream of an affordable place to call home has shaped the aspirations of millions. It's long been more than just an asset play. It has symbolised security, opportunity and a 'fair go'.

That dream has now become a recurring nightmare with too many Australians haunted by soaring rents, unaffordable house prices and an overall lack of housing choice.

Looking forward, this means that our children and grandchildren face the prospects of a lifetime of housing insecurity, unless we take appropriate action now.

Why are certain solutions to Australia's housing crisis so hard to achieve?

Many of the ideas that could effectively restore affordable housing, accessibility and security are off-limits in political discourse. Not because they wouldn't work, but because they are considered ideologically dangerous or too disruptive to vested interests.

Australia is not alone in its narrow, reactive approach to housing policy which is skewed toward politically safe interventions. It's not

that we don't know how to fix the problem, it's that we have boxed ourselves into a small range of politically acceptable solutions.

In public policy, this is what is often referred to as 'the Overton Window'.

### **A Window of Opportunity**

The Overton Window refers to a range of public policies considered palatable or "mainstream" in public discourse at a given time. Move too far outside the window by advocating ideas such as rent caps, land banking taxes or large-scale public housing development and you are often dismissed as idealistic or radical. Even worse, these policy ideas have even been framed as un-Australian.



How does this square with the most Australian of ideals, a fair go for all?

Instead, we cling to familiar populist measures such as first-home buyer grants, zoning tweaks and/or subsidies that favour investors – institutional and individual - because they are comfortable levers for government to pull.

Policy sugar hits dressed up as reform, rather than confronting systemic issues such as poor infrastructure planning, overly complex land use planning and building regulations, and, a disconnect between population settings and housing supply keeps us stuck in a vicious cycle of inertia.

## **Reviving the Great Australian Dream**

To revive the Great Australian Dream we need to expand the Overton Window and open our policy minds to the radical or historically ‘unthinkable’.

The window is currently only open to what is considered politically acceptable. This includes initiatives such as first home buyer incentives and finance support, superannuation access for home deposits, shared equity programs, voluntary inclusionary zoning and limited government investment in social and affordable housing.

Meanwhile, other ideas we urgently need to explore remain shuttered outside the window. These include:

- large-scale public and affordable housing construction;

- mandatory inclusionary zoning; and
- structural taxation reform including stamp duty, capital gains tax and negative gearing.

The Housing Australia Future Fund and National Housing Accord are welcome efforts to dip our toe in the water and test the reaction. Much more needs to be done.

Prioritising political optics over economic evidence has delivered a generational divide in housing where the majority of household income is spent on the cost of housing in a cost-of-living crisis. For too many, the window of opportunity will remain firmly shut until we are bold enough to start wedging it open again.

The uncomfortable truths are that we cannot solve the housing crisis with demand-side stimulus. NIMBYs are locking out essential workers and those with complex needs from having a home in the location they need it.

Private developers cannot carry the responsibility of providing more affordable housing without simpler regulations, faster approvals and proper investment in enabling infrastructure.

Shifting the Overton Window isn’t just about dreaming bigger. It’s about broadening the public understanding of what is necessary.

There is a concept in psychology called the ‘belief-behaviour gap’. It describes the climate activists that fly all over the world; the animal lovers that wear fur; the parents who bemoan the lack of housing for their children whilst living in a mansion with five

Air BNBS; and, the NIMBYs who espouse supporting affordable housing as long as it's not anywhere near them.

Many people will claim to support a whole range of things, until it comes to them doing something meaningful about it. We need to expand the public imagination of what housing policy can look like with courageous, systemic solutions. Then we need to back political leaders that are willing to redefine what is acceptable and consistently execute.

To open up that window, we need to:

- Redefine housing as **critical infrastructure** and treat it as such;
- Reclaim the public narrative around **housing as a right**, not a privilege reserved for those with the means;
- Invest in institutional capacity to plan and **deliver non-market housing at scale**, backed by the government;
- Ensure a unified **whole-of-government, approach** across all levels of the bureaucracy that adequately plans for population growth with up-front funding for infrastructure, strategic land use planning policy and enduring investment in social housing;
- Support the transformation and innovation within the construction sector to rapidly increase productivity and industry sustainability; and

- Commit to bold **tax reform** for long-term housing security.

## Conclusions

Reviving the Great Australian Dream won't come from policy tweaks or handouts. Rather, it will come from leadership that expands the window of opportunity without closing it again out of fear. Not just from our politicians, but from leaders in our society that have a moral obligation to advocate and use their influence for what is necessary.

What has in the past been considered unthinkable, may in fact now be a necessity. If we want to be on the right side of history, it's time to open the window wide and admit bold and courageous ideas into mainstream political discourse, and, moreover, policy action.

Our Great Australian Dream depends on it.

## **People Power Will Help Revive the Great Australian Dream**

Kim Macdonald

Property Editor, The West Australian

### **It's All About... Supply... Housing and Labour Supply!**

Reviving the Great Australian Dream of home ownership is best handled by one key change – dramatically boosting the number of dwellings.

Of course, there are other policy levers we can pull to broadly support this goal. For example, stamp duty could be abolished and replaced with a land tax; or, limits could be placed on the number of properties that can be negatively geared.

Put simply, it all comes back to Economics 101 – prices sit where demand meets supply.

Significantly increasing the supply of housing is largely being held up by a labour supply shortage. We need more tradespeople and we need to better organise them.

I'm not the first to point out that more migrant tradies will help us to build our way out of the housing crisis, but they are not coming to Australia or WA in the numbers we need. The question is – why? In short, we have a classic catch-22 situation: tradies are needed to build homes, but without affordable homes, tradies won't come.

### **From Dongas Big Things Grow**

This catch-22 is not a post-COVID-19 phenomenon. It is one that mining sites in regional and remote locations in Australia, Canada and the US have faced for hundreds of years and managed to address.

How?

By building workers' camps.

Workers camps are by no means an alien concept here in WA. In fact, they're part and parcel of WA's housing and economic landscape. They're used every day by the large FIFO labour force that fly to regional and remote WA from around the state and across Australia.

Admittedly, these camps are not a cheap fix. Back in early 2023, the US-based lithium company, Albermale, secured development approval for a 850-person workers' village in Australind at a cost of almost \$130m<sup>8</sup>. It was a comfortable set-up with cleaning and catering services.

In late 2024 Albermale decided to sell the workers village in the wake of falling lithium prices and a decision to scale back its mining operations in WA. The State Government missed an opportunity to buy these transportable homes and use the village for FIFO tradies or add to the supply

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<sup>8</sup> <https://www.abc.net.au/news/2023-04-01/albemarle-850-person-workers-camp-australind-approved/102172410>

of social and affordable housing in the outer south-west corridor in the Perth and Peel region.

Albemarle recently sold the site for just \$32m to a private developer with plans to use the site for private rental housing and an over-50 lifestyle village.

There also seems a great opportunity for the State to house temporary construction workers at the 500-bed, \$400 million Bullsbrook quarantine facility which, to my knowledge, has never been substantially occupied.

In light of the State's \$2.5b budget surplus, it could easily afford to build multiple workers villages similar to the one approved for Albermale.

If the state were to build say four of these worker villages, each housing between 500-700 people from trades with the biggest shortage this would undoubtedly have a major impact on increasing housing supply and reducing house prices.

These workers villages could operate like the dry FIFO camps up north – taking in skilled migrant construction workers – bricklayers, plumbers, electricians and carpenters etc – from places such as Afghanistan, the Philippines, India, Ireland, the UK and Europe.

The workers could put in big hours for big wages, helping set themselves and their families up for life back in their home country. Permanent residency could also be on the cards for those that complete a sustained period (e.g. 3-4 years) of working and living in WA.

Ultimately, recruiting a large international construction labour force would help bring down construction wages, overall construction costs and thus reduce housing costs. This does not mean that temporary international workers should be exploited. They need to have appropriate workplace protections.

## **Construction Costs & Productivity**

Generally speaking, I am supportive of high wages for tradies. The wear and tear on their bodies means many are forced into early retirement. As such they should receive some kind of premium to cover their longer than average retirement period.

That said, recent personal experience of building an extension to my home has me questioning what is a reasonable wage in the construction sector?

I've been informed by my builder that the carpenter who will work on the extension earns \$170k a year, without overtime! This is on par with what some doctors and lawyers earn.

Such labour costs, due largely to a lack of tradies, are a handbrake on housing supply because people cannot afford to build houses at these rates.

Parallel to these high wages, productivity in the constructions sector has been falling. New data from the Master Builders Association shows that building a house from approval to completion in 2018-2019 took on average the guts of nine months.

This has doubled to 18 months in the last financial year.

The productivity gap in the construction sector has also been highlighted in a recent report from CEDA which noted that ‘Australia is building half as many

homes per construction worker as in the 1970s’<sup>9</sup>.

Anecdotally, builders say the blow-out in time is largely due to waiting to get hold of tradespeople. In addition, many tradies now only need to work a four day a week in to earn a decent wage.

## Getting the House in Order

Paradoxically, although Australia has a labour shortage, it has one of the highest number of construction workers per 1000 people at 5.2. This compares with 4.1 in Canada, 3.6 in the US, (3.1 in the UK and 3.3. for the OECD according to 2023 World Bank statistics.

This data reinforces the fact that productivity is a contributory factor to housing costs and affordability.

Increasing productivity within the construction industry can be achieved if labour practices are better organised. Again, we need only look to the mining sector.

At the moment, residential construction sites basically sit idle for two days a week over the weekend – this equates to round

29% of the week lost– all during the midst of a housing crisis.

What if the construction industry adopted the “roster system” used in the mining sector to ensure continuous building activity and thus lifting productivity? A system of say 7 days on and 5 days off would arguably see both greater output and leave for workers.

## Conclusions

Moving to this approach will require some big changes to industrial relations legislation and policy as well as the cultural mindset of the construction industry at the firm and individual worker level

If we are sincere about tackling the housing crisis, reviving the great Australian dream of home ownership and ensuring housing security for all Australians, then we need bigger, braver and bolder policy ideas and action.

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<sup>9</sup> <https://www.ceda.com.au/newsandresources/mediareleases/workforce-skills/size-matters-why-construction-productivity-is-so-weak>

## **A Fresh Look at the Australian Housing Dream**

Keth Snell

CEO, Shelter WA

### **Whatever happened to the Great Australian Dream?**

For decades, the Australian housing dream has been symbolised by a detached house on a quarter-acre block — a home you own, in a suburb you've chosen, with a backyard for kids or pets.

But today, that dream feels increasingly out of reach for many Australians, particularly in Western Australia, where a severe housing shortage and skyrocketing demand have collided with limited affordable supply. The result is a housing system stretched to breaking point.

It's time we take a fresh look at what the Australian housing dream should be. Perhaps it's not about owning a house, but about ensuring that everyone — regardless of income, ability, or circumstance has a safe, secure, and suitable place to live.

### **The WA Housing Crisis**

Western Australia is in the midst of a housing crisis. Record low rental vacancy rates, surging prices, and an insufficient supply of affordable and social housing have created a market that is simply not functioning for the majority.

Recent research<sup>10</sup> shows that median house rental costs in Perth increased by 76% in the last four years (2021-2025).

And, median unit rental costs almost doubled over the same period.

Some 5,800 West Australians assisted everyday by Specialist Homelessness Services (SHS) - an increase of 38% since 2020<sup>11</sup>.

For many, home ownership is a distant dream, while for others, even renting a modest home is a challenge. Thousands of individuals and households are at risk of homelessness, and some already are living in cars, couch-surfing, or sleeping rough.

The root causes are complex:

- years of underinvestment in public and social housing,
- regulatory bottlenecks,
- rising construction costs, and
- speculative investment that has seen housing treated more as an investment mechanism instead of a human right.

But rather than blame these pressures, we need to rethink our expectations and build a housing system that works for everyone.

<sup>10</sup> Source SQM Research Daily Rents

<sup>11</sup> Specialist Homeless Services Annual Report 2023/2024.

## Rethinking the Housing Dream

In many other countries, notably, Germany, Austria and Switzerland, renting for life is common, socially accepted, and secure. People live in well-maintained, affordable, long-term [public and private] rentals with tenant protections that provide stability and dignity.

Higher-density living in apartments, townhouses, or repurposed buildings is normal and, in many cases, desirable. Why not here?

Part of the answer lies in cultural narratives. Australians have long equated home ownership with success, stability, and social status. But this mindset no longer reflects the realities faced by the majority, particularly younger people, low-income earners, and those with specific housing needs.

Shifting the narrative is essential: instead of aiming for ownership at any cost, we should aim for appropriate, secure housing for all – whether this is in a rental or in your own home.

## The Need for Diverse Housing Options

At Shelter WA, we believe that everyone should have a home where they can thrive. This doesn't mean a one-size-fits-all model. It means recognising that different people have different housing needs — and that our housing system must be designed to accommodate that diversity, including:

- Permanent supportive housing is essential for people with complex needs – those experiencing chronic homelessness, disability, or mental illness. These homes must be designed not only for comfort and accessibility, but also include integrated and long-term support services to help residents maintain stability. In WA we have only recently started on our permanent supportive housing journey with two Common Ground facilities that are nearing completion. Queensland has embedded this model into their long-term plans for housing.
- Affordable housing is critical for low- and moderate-income workers and families, plus key workers who keep our communities functioning. These homes need to be genuinely affordable, close to transport, work, and education. The need for affordable housing is growing in WA as the gap between social housing and private market housing continues to grow, leaving a larger number of Western Australians without affordable housing options.
- Accessible housing must be part of the conversation too. An ageing population, coupled with growing awareness of disability inclusion, demands housing that is adaptable and inclusive from the outset. (see Building Better Homes campaign).

A thriving, inclusive housing system must include all of these options, and more — in sufficient numbers and in the right places.

## What Needs to Change?

There are practical, achievable steps that governments at all levels can take

to reshape the housing landscape:

- **Increase Supply of Social and Affordable Housing:** This is the backbone of a **just housing system**. Governments must treat housing, at minimum, as **essential infrastructure**, just like roads or hospitals, but ideally as a recognised **human right** and invest accordingly.
- **Repurpose Existing Buildings:** Building new homes using traditional bricks and mortar methods is time-consuming and inefficient. We need to find ways to use and repurpose pre-existing under-utilised buildings. Across WA and Australia, many office blocks, old hotels, and commercial spaces sit empty or underutilised. With the right investment and regulatory conditions, these can be transformed relatively efficiently and cost-effectively into liveable, sustainable housing. This will help provide a richer mix of housing. We are starting to see this happen and welcome it.
- **Bring Short-term Rentals Back to the Long-term Market:** Sharing

platforms such as Airbnb have taken thousands of homes out of the long-term rental market thereby restricting supply and exacerbated housing unaffordability. A balanced approach that includes regulatory measures and incentives can help return these properties to the rental market and offer greater housing opportunity to people who need a place to live.

- **Normalise Renting: Expand Built-to-Rent and Strengthen Renters' Rights:** Renters should not live in fear of unfair evictions, unaffordable rent hikes, or substandard housing conditions. Strong tenancy laws protect people from falling into homelessness and provide the stability families need to build their lives. (see Make Renting Fair Campaign).

## A Housing System for All, Not Just Investors

Perhaps the biggest shift we need is a philosophical one: recognising that housing is a human right, not just an investment vehicle.

Currently, a small percentage of Australians use the housing market to build wealth, often owning multiple properties, while others struggle to find a single roof over their heads. This imbalance is not just unfair — it's unsustainable.

We need policies that discourage speculative investment and prioritise housing as shelter, not a commodity.

## **Towards a New Australian Dream**

It's time to redefine the Australian housing dream. Instead of clinging to outdated ideals of ownership and detached homes, we should strive for a country where everyone has access to a safe, affordable, and appropriate home — regardless of whether they own it.

This new dream is defined by several key elements:

- The security of knowing you won't be evicted unfairly.
- The dignity of living in a home that meets your needs.
- The assurance that your housing situation won't prevent you from thriving.

This vision is not radical — it is rational and fair. Moreover, it is achievable. It requires our political leaders to be courageous, demonstrate leadership for the many not the few, and, a willingness to put people before profit.

At Shelter WA, we will continue to advocate for housing solutions that reflect the real needs of our communities. A diverse, inclusive, and secure housing system is not just a dream — it's a necessity. And with the right mix of policy, investment, and community support, it is well within reach.

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**Associate Professor Paul Maginn**



Associate Professor Paul Maginn is the Director of the UWA Public Policy Institute and co-ordinator of the Administration and Governance stream of the Masters of Public Policy at UWA.

Paul is an urban planner/geographer and has been at UWA since February 2007. He previously held positions at the University of South Australia and Edith Cowan University, having migrated to Australia in 2003.

He has co-edited a number of books, his latest—*Suburbia in the 21st Century: From Dreamscape to Nightmare?* alongside Professor Katrin Anacker (George Mason University, USA)—published in 2022 by Routledge. Paul is also Editor-in-Chief of *Urban Policy and Research*.

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**AUTHORS**

**Professor Paul Flatau**



Professor Paul Flatau is the Director of the CSI UWA. He was formerly the Director of the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute WA Research Centre. Paul has over 100 publications covering various fields, including labour economics, the history of economic thought, and social policy. Much of Paul's work in recent years has involved close contact with the not-for-profit sector, social enterprises, government partners, industry and philanthropists. Paul has made significant contributions to

the analysis of social and economic outcomes and social impact and the effectiveness of programs and interventions in poverty, unemployment, homelessness, and housing. Paul holds a PhD in Economics from Murdoch University, an M.Ec. from UWA and a B.Ec. from Sydney University.

**Kim Macdonald**



Kim Macdonald is The West Australian newspaper's property and urban planning editor. She started at The Sunday Times in 1999, and spent five years covering politics and education. She then moved to London and worked for The Daily Express before moving to Sydney to work at The Daily Telegraph, including a six-month stint as acting business editor. She joined The West Australian in 2004 as IR reporter. Her media awards include the Arthur Lovekin Prize for journalism.

**Kath Snell**



Kath's career history is varied through Sports Tourism Management, Commercial Radio and Marketing in the UK, where she is from.

But it was here in Perth, she found her true career purpose in the Not-for-Profit sector in 2006.

Kath is passionate about opportunity for all, equity, connectedness, empowerment, and support for everyone to live the best life they possibly can.

Kath spent eleven years working in community aged care and has a soft spot for the volunteer sector, and for social engagement opportunities for all. She spent four years as CEO of Volunteer Task Force, and helped drive the merger to become Chorus. Kath moved to CEO of United Way WA in 2017, and developed social engagement programs for those living in disadvantage as part of United Way WA's offering. She is passionate about positive workplace culture where people are empowered to thrive.

Kath is a graduate of the Australian Institute of Company Directors, has sat on four boards during her time in Perth, as well as various committees. She is currently Chair of Orana House, Women's Refuge. Kath is the 2021 winner of the Individual Championing Diversity on Boards Award, presented by Engaging Young Leaders.

Kath is also a qualified marriage and funeral celebrant, plus in 2022 completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Psychology of Business and Management. She loves being involved in community and social engagement, she believes in physical and mental fitness and having a life that is balanced and full of variety.

**Tanya Steinbeck**



Tanya Steinbeck is a strategic leader and passionate advocate with over 25 years of experience driving change in property development, housing policy, and public administration. As CEO of UDIA WA, Tanya champions evidence-based policy reform and sustainable urban development while leading a high-performing team unified by clear purpose and vision. Appointed to the BankWest Curtin Economics Centre Advisory Board in 2024 and to the Board of the Western

Australian Association for Mental Health in 2022, Tanya is passionate about driving systemic change in housing, mental health and organisational culture.

Recognised in the Business News Power 500, Tanya's extensive networks across property, infrastructure, and government sectors support her in creating meaningful impact. Having worked as a senior leader for the State Government in housing, for ASX-listed property companies Stockland and Mirvac and Property Council of Australia, Tanya's approach has been focused on collaboratively driving significant reforms in planning, infrastructure, environmental assessment and housing policy. Her views are regularly sought out across mainstream media on the housing & urban development landscape for Perth and Western Australia.

**NOTES**

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**Citation** Flatau, P., Macdonald, K., Snell, K. and Steinbeck, T. (2025). *Reviving the Great Australian Dream: Homeownership & Housing Security for All*, Perth: UWA Public Policy Institute.

**DOI:** <https://doi.org/10.26182/az3b-sp73>

**ISBN** 978-1-74052-926-6

**DOI** <https://doi.org/10.26182/az3b-sp73>

