

EVERYONE BENEFITS FROM GOOD HOUSING



Actions for the Queensland
Housing Summit

QUEENSLAND CHAPTER
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS

Hawthorne Siblings | REFRESH*DESIGN | Photographer Scott Burrows



PRESIDENT'S FOREWORD

Our Queensland communities urgently need more homes. As a professional community, the Australian Institute of Architects is committed to being part of the solution by bringing the creative and practical expertise of its members to the Queensland Housing Summit.

Times of great challenge are often also times of great change. The housing and homelessness crisis our Queensland communities are currently experiencing may be the catalyst for a transformation in our housing industry – from one that is fragmented with a ‘divide and defeat’ legacy, to one focused on collaboration, creation, and community.

Architects are often perceived as being at the periphery of the housing sector. However, we have demonstrated the power of design-led solutions to innovatively respond to our housing challenges. Recent architect-led housing initiatives, such as the work of Nightingale in Victoria, the infill subdivision micro urban villages of Southport, and the creative small household social homes at Anne St Garden Villas on the Gold Coast are three familiar examples of our leadership.

The courage, commitment and creativity demonstrated by such initiatives will become more important in the coming transformation. In addition to grappling with the urgent and significant demand for more housing, the sector is also welcoming the challenges of increasing the quality of that housing, in response to the new National Construction Council Codes for sustainability and accessibility.

Immediate solutions are essential today, but aspiration, resilience, flexibility, accessibility, sustainability, and diversity will be the measures of our success tomorrow. One does not need to be sacrificed for the other. Consolidating our urban footprints rather than expanding them will minimise the costs of infrastructure and to our climate, while enhancing long-term affordability and inclusion for the communities and residents being housed.

Stressed supply chains and labour shortages are further exacerbating demand, while innovation, prefabrication and collaboration will be valuable tools to bridge the enormous gaps in the availability of quality housing. As architects, we believe in designing responses to meet these challenges with positive change – driving transformation, not trade-offs.



Amy Degenhart LFRAIA

QLD CHAPTER PRESIDENT
AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF
ARCHITECT



Amy Degenhart | Photographer Ravens At Odds

ABOUT THE INSTITUTE

The Australian Institute of Architects (Institute) is the peak body for the architectural profession in Australia. It is an independent, national member organisation with around 13,000 members across Australia and overseas.

The Institute exists to advance the interests of members, their professional standards and contemporary practice, and expand and advocate the value of architects and architecture to the sustainable growth of our communities, economy and culture.

The Institute actively works to maintain and improve the quality of our built environment by promoting better, responsible and environmental design.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide a statement to the Queensland Housing Summit on 20 October 2022.

This submission is made by the Australian Institute of Architects Queensland Chapter to provide input on the Queensland housing crisis.

At the time of this submission the Chapter President is Amy Degenhart.

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Cornwall Street | KO&Co Architecture | Photographer Kate Mathieson Photography



SUMMARY

The themes below organise a selection of short-, medium- and long-term strategies that inspire action from a diverse audience of commercial, charitable, civic, and community collaborators

1. LEARN

- Provide “retrofit-to-rent” architectural survey advice to homeowners at no cost through public grants
- Assemble a library of architect-designed case studies of exemplar missing middle housing typologies
- Look to research – both new and existing – to help make tough but informed decisions for lasting change

2. LEGISLATE

- Add Aged Pension as an eligibility criterion to the definition of Community Residence legislation
- Accept freehold subdivision of any dual frontage lot of 600m² or more in Low density residential areas
- Measure dwelling density by bedrooms rather than homes to incentivise smaller households
- Introduce a “risk-smart” low-rise housing diversity code unlocking greyfield density through good design
- Offer a state-wide minimum lot size reduction bonus within walking distance of eligible amenity

- Create a Qld Planning Regulation for Cohousing and Ecovillage intentional community developments

3. LEVERAGE

- Entice immediate, temporary conversion of short-term letting to long-term living with moratoriums
- Offer redundant state and/or local authority redundant land for affordable housing through a design tender
- Facilitate funding for quality gentle density housing in greyfield areas through pre-sales for social housing
- De-couple the car and the dwelling near transport to optimisation of both resources and reduce traffic

4. LEAD

- Ensure early new and converted housing is still leading by example with accessible and sustainable design
- Capture opportunities for bulk building and billing through standard plans and project builder collaborations
- Develop market-rate, long-tenure public housing and use income/profits to fund crisis accommodation
- Pair the strategies of house-share and car-share design benefits to bring more housing into less space
- Use all new housing as an opportunity to upgrade our verges, adding street trees to green our city.

Envi Micro Urban Village | DegenhartSHEDD | Photographer Tom Anthony

LEARN

The provision of timely, concise, applicable, and affordable “what”, “when”, “how” and “why” professional advice can unlock immediate housing resources and inspire a continuous supply

→ “Retrofit-to-Rent”

The Brisbane City Flood Resilience Action Plan, which includes an initial free-of-charge professional survey of existing conditions and solutions, is an excellent example of architectural services can be made available where and when they are needed most. If a similar model were used for the potential retrofit of larger homes to include rental accommodation, the investment would not only be rewarded by way of providing an increase in smaller household housing, but also by way of increased rates and property taxes. However, the legacy benefit would be an enhanced appreciation for the value of good design in domestic construction.

→ Missing middle exemplar case studies

As implied by the word “missing”, this typology, which includes low-and medium-rise gentle density outcomes, is neither common nor cookie-cutter, and examples to inspire predictable solutions would save time, offer predictability, and ease community apprehensions.

→ Research, resolve, revise, and repeat

There is a wealth of valuable housing research available to better inform innovative solutions or refine established strategies, while further and/or enhanced research customised for Queensland is also needed and would be of value for its process as well as product.

Brassey Street | Steendijk | Photographer Christopher Frederick Jones

LEGISLATE

A diverse, interconnected tapestry of legislation (planning, building, titling, tenancy, taxation, valuation, funding, eligibility, ownership, etc.) all combine to have an impact on housing supply

→ **Aged Pension eligibility for Community Residence developments**

A tweak of the Planning Regulation Community Residence definition could open opportunities for local, compact aged-care alternatives

→ **Accept freehold subdivisions on dual frontage lots of >600m² through Queensland**

The “Living Options” typology was invented at Varsity Lakes, it was the urban design, rather than the bottom line, that benefitted most from enhanced dual frontage presentation

→ **Density measured in bedrooms encourages small households**

Measuring density by bedrooms in suburban precincts is an easy way to incentivise smaller households by increasing the number of homes without increasing the extent of built form

→ **Introduce a “risk-smart” low-rise housing diversity code**

Following the leadership of the NSW government, introducing a design-led code to unlock three and four dwellings on low-density lots will help unlock ‘stuck’ suburbs

→ **State-wide minimum lot size bonus offsets**

Bonus minimum lot size offsets could be applied to suburban lots close to amenity, shopping, transport, employment, education and/or open space, providing gentle density around neighbourhood clusters through urban infill house and land packaging

→ **Create a Queensland Planning Regulation for Cohousing and Ecovillages**

On a scale larger than a Community Residence but based on a similar format, codify a pathway for intentional, regenerative communities, linked by a shared ecological value

Salt on Taylor | OGE Group Architects | Photographer Cade Media

LEVERAGE

Leverage is a means of accessing advantage, while land, legislation, and capital are all levers that can use advantage to achieve unique, specific, desirable, and exemplar housing outcomes

→ **Incentivise the transition of existing short-term to long-term letting**

Entice immediate – though temporary – conversion of short-term letting to long-term living through a strategy of offering moratoriums, amnesties and/or application fee discounts as a trade-off to the properties in question being immediately used for long-term letting

→ **Offer public owned land for sale via design-led invited tenders**

By leveraging the value of land ownership, state and local government can use redundant land to host endorsed Institute of Architects competitions seeking the best and most creative opportunities for sites, particularly where they are strategically located and can enhance the character of an entire community

→ **Invest public capital in small percentages of select housing projects**

The best means of ensuring social housing is distributed throughout a community is by purchasing a small percentage (10%) of dwellings in selected private projects, in turn facilitating their pre-sales and development funding while at the same time accessing value and diversifying the housing portfolio

→ **Leverage the advantages of public transport by decoupling house and car**

Public transport represents significant investment that must support and be supported by a large portion of the population, so providing housing of all forms with few or no cars near public transport nodes not only provides more citizens the convenience of transport, it also encourages financial patronage

Vertical Village | COX Architecture | Photographer Christopher Frederick Jones

LEAD

Queensland is challenged with limited and aging housing stock and the inability to deliver new stock quickly today, making good leadership the commodity of most value for tomorrow

→ **Ensure that tomorrow's outcomes are not compromised by today's urgency**

As recently legislated NCC accessibility and sustainability standards do not take immediate effect, the industry may be tempted to deliver housing in the name of urgency that will not meet these long-term standards, and leadership will be required to ensure the opportunity to provide legacy housing for tomorrow is captured today

→ **Bulk builds, designs, and billing to provide quality, expediency, and predictability**

Standard plans/bulk designs offer the ability to invest far more in the creative process, as many clients share the cost, while bulk builds also allow builders to conquer much of the risks of unpredictability, making a collaboration between the two strategies a valuable combination

→ **Develop market-rate, long-tenure public housing, using income to fund social housing**

Public housing is traditionally rented at a subsidised rate, but even tenants who can afford to pay the rent cannot find a secure place to call home. By changing the landlord to a non-for-profit entity with quality secure tenure as a goal, two sectors of the community can be catered for, those with the affluence to choose a long-term lease, and those who will benefit from the funding of quality, architect-design social housing

→ **Pair the strategies of house-share and car-share designs**

Some councils have already embraced an exchange of shared cars with required on-site car parking (applying a factor of 1 to 5), as research shows that each share car has the potential to take 10 cars off the road. In a co-housing living style, sharing of resources like cars is a sensible and sustainable strategy, supporting living-lighter principles. Less on site car parking importantly delivers a greater opportunity for more people to live close to work, school, transport and amenity as well as making room available on site for landscaping and green space too.

→ **Every housing project is an opportunity to add street trees**

Virtually every verge or footpath in our suburban neighborhoods has the capacity to support greater landscaping and/or street trees, so let's use every millimeter to green our cities as well as our homes.

Longfellow Terraces | REFRESH*DESIGN | Photographer Cathy Schusler

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