



University of the
West of England

Health: The Design, Planning and Politics of How and Where We Live

- **Paper / Proposal Title:**

HOME: Transdisciplinary Solutions to the Health Impacts of the Australian Housing Crisis

- **Format:**

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- **Author(s) Name:**

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- **Abstract (300 words):**

Australia is in the midst of a housing crisis. Recent OECD data show that Australia jumped from 29th to the ninth most unaffordable country for housing in just five years. At the same time, the Committee for Economic Development Australia emphasises, that unaffordable, poorly designed housing is having widespread and long-reaching consequences for the Australian community. This especially impacts the most vulnerable: people on low incomes, migrants, Indigenous Australians and ethnic minorities; women and children escaping family violence; youth exiting out-of-home care and people leaving prison; those with mental ill-health and/or a disability who are less likely to find employment and thus more likely to become homeless; and an ageing population unable to age-in-place.

The Australian housing crisis is one of the “wicked problems” of our age; demanding concerted, transdisciplinary research informing innovative policy intervention. Its acknowledged challenges are in four areas:

1. meeting diversity in the community;
2. rising levels of housing stress and homelessness;
3. social polarisation and poor health; and
4. stifled economic growth in the context of unaffordable housing and poorly connected neighbourhoods.

This paper describes the formation of a transdisciplinary research team **HOME**, in an Australian University formed to tackle these issues. To date in Australia, each academic discipline has viewed the housing crisis through its own lens. Thus, built environment, health, housing economics and social policy researchers have rarely come together to direct holistic solutions to the complex matrix of interrelated causes and problems of the health impacts of the housing crisis.

Through a series of case studies this paper describes examples of existing transdisciplinary work by members of the team – on universal design, building more socially connected suburbs and child friendly infill housing - that underpinned the establishment of **HOME**, along with our strategies to formalise **HOME** as a research centre.

• **Author(s) Biography (200 words each):**

Dr Fiona Andrews is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health & Social Development at Deakin University. Together with Associate Professor Tucker and Professor Johnson, she co-leads the recently formed research network; **HOME**. **HOME** brings together academics from Architecture & Urban Planning, Humanities & Social Sciences, Health & Social Development, Geography, Anthropology, Economics, Social Policy and Law to develop cross-disciplinary solutions to the housing crisis in Australia. **HOME** has a single core aim: A Home for all. Dr Andrews has published widely on the social health impacts of neighbourhoods and housing on families, including two first author publications in the Q1 journal, *Health & Place*. She has a particular interest in participatory research, working with residents and local government to develop more socially inclusive housing and neighbourhoods, across a range of different urban contexts. She is currently researching families' experiences of new, high density housing in Melbourne and teaches in postgraduate courses on Healthy Cities that attract students from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds.

Associate Professor Richard Tucker has published approaching 80 outputs on: sustainable design, urban design, the pedagogy of architectural design, the impact of sustainable design on children's environmental behaviours, and the relationship between health and

the built environment. His work has involved substantial competitive grant-funded projects (ten investigations, funded for over \$1 million) including six as project leader. He has been Associate Head of Research in Architecture and Built Environment for 6 years. His teaching innovation, which is closely aligned with his research, was recognised in 2011 when he became only the 2nd academic in the discipline of Architecture to be awarded the prestigious Australian Learning & Teaching Council Award for Teaching Excellence. Richard is the co-leader of the research network HOME. HOME connects experts from Architecture & Urban Planning, Humanities & Social Sciences, Health & Social Development, Geography, Anthropology, Economics, Social Policy and Law to enlighten the causes and health impacts of the housing crisis. HOME fills a significant research gap through focus on re-purposing what we have – to revitalise existing housing, creatively reuse other existing buildings, and better integrate new development.

Dr Louise Johnson is Professor in Australian Studies. A human geographer, she has researched the gendered nature of suburban houses, changing manufacturing workplaces as well as the dynamics of Australian regional economies. Major publications include *Suburban Dreaming* (DUP 1994), *Placebound: Australian Feminist Geographies* (OUP 2000), *Cultural Capitals: Revaluing the Arts. Remaking Urban Spaces* (Ashgate 2009) and *Planning in Indigenous Australia: From Imperial Foundations to Postcolonial Futures* (Taylor and Francis 2018 with Sue Jackson and Libby Porter). She is currently researching social and spatial change in Geelong, older women's housing needs and post-colonial planning and teaches Human and Urban Geography.