A crisis or not a crisis? Local governments' analyses of housing affordability

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The central aim and argument

- Study draws on a national survey of local government (ARC Linkage, Local Government and Housing in Australia for the 21st Century).
- Key aim to establish how Councils in different contexts perceive housing affordability and policy around this issue in their LGA.
- Key argument / finding very significant differences. Sydney and Melbourne (combined) are in a different world compared to other domains in regards to local government and housing affordability and policy.

Overview of the 178 Councils that responded to the survey

Council	Count	Percentage
Sydney (18) & Melbourne (13)	31	17
Other metro	27	15
Regional	63	35
Rural	57	32
Grand Total	178	100

Photos by Sandy Horne

Perceptions of housing affordability



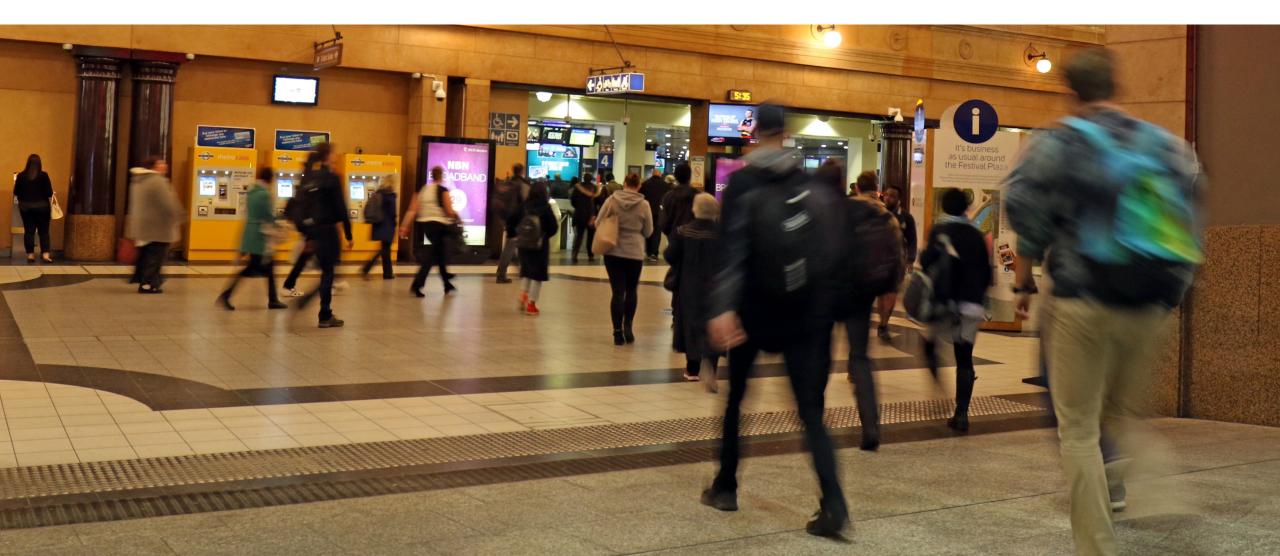
In the view of the Council, to what extent is there a housing affordability problem in the area?

	Very limited extent %	Limited extent %	Some extent %	Substantial extent %	Very substantial extent %
Sydney & Melbourne	3	0	29	19	48
Other metro	11	15	44	30	0
Regional	16	25	33	22	3
Rural	20	16	41	18	5
Grand Total	14	16	37	21	11

In your estimation, what proportion of housing stock within your Council area could be considered affordable?

	5% or less %	10% %	15% %	20% or more %
Sydney & Melbourne	68	13	6	13
Other metro	26	30	7	37
Regional	18	19	10	53
Rural	4	20	13	64
Grand Total	23	20	10	47

Key workers



How concerned is your Council about the impact of the ability of key workers to live in your local government area due to the high cost of housing?

	Not relevant %	Not at all concerned %	Slightly concerned %	Moderately concerned %	Very concerned %	Extremely concerned %
Sydney & Melbourne	3	3	16	16	35	26
Other metro	12	35	15	10	19	8
Regional	11	32	18	26	11	2
Rural	12	30	19	23	7	9
Grand Total	10	27	18	21	15	9



Housing policy around affordability

To what extent is finding ways to provide adequate affordable housing in your LGA a priority for your Council?

	Very limited	Limited		Substantial	Very substantial
	extent	extent	Some extent	extent	extent
	%	%	%	%	%
Sydney &					
Melbourne	10	16	39	32	3
Other metro	22	37	22	19	0
Regional	25	29	29	14	3
Rural	26	23	37	11	4
Grand Total	22	26	32	17	3

To what extent do elected members of Council give housing affordability attention?

	Very limited	Limited		Substantial	Very substantial
	extent	extent	Some extent		extent
	%	%	%	%	%
Sydney &					
Melbourne	13	6	52	26	3
	20	26			0
Other metro	30	26	41	4	0
Regional	21	37	32	10	2
Rural	23	28	33	14	2
Grand Total	21	27	37	13	2

What level of priority has your Council given housing issues relative to other Council business?

	Very low	Low	Moderate	High	Very high
	%	%	%	%	%
Sydney &					
Melbourne	3	13	27	53	3
Other					
metro	11	22	41	26	0
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Regional	11	33	33	17	5
Rural	11	44	26	16	4
Grand					
Total	10	32	31	24	3

To what extent do changes in the composition of councillors impact on your Council's housing priorities?

	Unsure %	Very limited extent %	Limited extent %		Very substantial extent %
Sydney & Melbourne	3	3	19	42	32
Other metro	7	15	33	30	15
Regional	3	32	35	24	6
Rural	7	39	32	21	2
Grand Total	5	26	31	27	11

How extreme are the challenges, barriers or issues for addressing affordable housing by local governments?

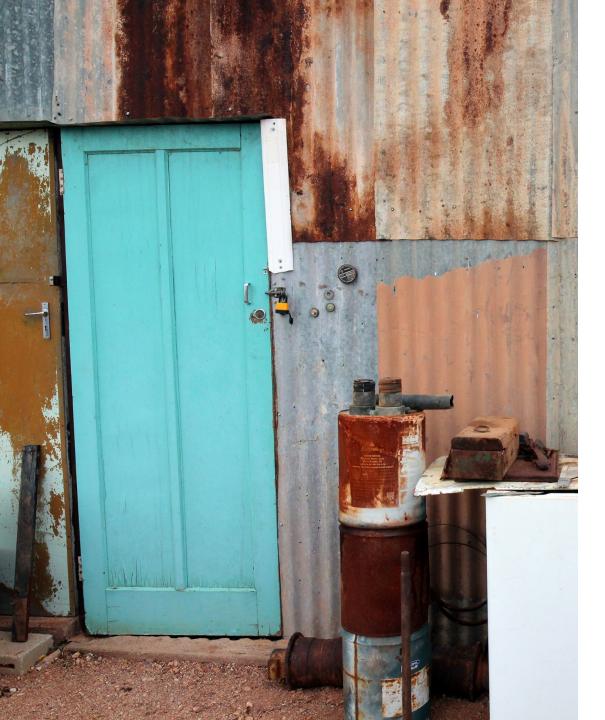
	No challenges/barrie	Limited challenges/barrie	Some challenges/barrie	Substantial challenges/barrie	Very substantial challenges/barrie
	rs/issues	rs/issues	rs/issues	rs/issues	rs/issues
	%	%	%	%	%
Sydney &					
Melbourne	3	0	6	65	26
Other metro	4	4	26	48	19
Regional	10	14	40	35	2
Rural	11	13	29	27	21
Grand Total	8	10	28	40	15

Is there an explicit housing affordability target or goal within Council?

	No	Yes
	%	%
Sydney & Melbourne	74	26
Other metro	89	11
Regional	87	13
Rural	95	5
Grand Total	88	12

Would you describe your Council's policies relating to housing in your area as comprehensive?

	Not at all %	To a very limited extent %	Limited extent %	Some extent %	Substantial extent %	Very substanti al extent %
Sydney & Melbourne	3	3	10	47	37	0
Other metro	7	19	22	33	15	4
Regional	15	21	24	24	16	0
Rural	35	18	29	13	4	2
Grand Total	18	17	23	26	16	1



Overcrowding and homelessness

In the view of Council to what extent is overcrowding of homes an issue in your area?

	Very limited extent %	Limited extent %	Some extent %	Substantial extent %	Very substantial extent %
Sydney &					
Melbourne	23	39	32	6	0
Other metro	63	30	4	4	0
Regional	54	32	11	3	0
Rural	61	16	11	7	5
Grand Total	52	28	13	5	2

To what extent is homelessness a problem in your Council area?

	Do not know %	Very limited extent %	Limited extent %	Some extent %	Substantial extent %	Very substantial extent %
Sydney &		10	4.0	40	27	
Melbourne	3	13	13	40	27	3
Other						
metro	0	38	31	15	8	8
Regional	10	17	30	38	5	0
Rural	5	49	28	12	4	2
Grand Total	6	30	27	27	9	2

Is it your perception that homelessness in your Council area has increased over the last 5 years to ...

	Do not know %	A very limited extent %	A limited extent %	Some extent %	A substantial extent %	A very substantial extent %
Sydney &						
Melbourne	23	10	7	29	26	7
Other						
metro	46	26	7	11	11	0
Regional	27	16	24	29	3	2
Rural	39	30	14	16	2	0
Grand						
Total	33	21	15	22	8	2

Does your Council have a formal homelessness policy or set of strategies?

	No %	Yes %
Sydney & Melbourne	58	42
Other metro	93	7
Regional	92	8
Rural	98	2
Grand Total	88	12



What level/s of government are responsible for housing?

Who would your Council say Is primarily responsible for addressing the problems associated with housing in Australia?

	A combination of all levels of government %	Local councils %	Non- government organisations %		The Federal Government %	The State Government %
Sydney & Melbourne	42	0	0	0	13	45
Other metro	41	0	4	0	11	44
Regional	57	2	2	0	10	30
Rural	49	0	2	4	11	35
Grand Total	49	1	2	1	11	37

Immigration: Is it an issue?



How concerned is your Council about the impact of immigration?

	Not relevant %	Not at all concerned %	0 /	Moderately concerned %	•	Extremely concerned %
Sydney &						
Melbourne	7	57	13	17	7	0
Other metro	12	50	23	8	0	8
Regional	21	47	23	7	3	0
Rural	39	47	11	4	0	0
Grand Total	23	49	17	7	2	1

Conclusions

- Local governments' perceptions of housing affordability clearly dependent on location.
- Most local governments in Sydney and Melbourne have a clear sense that there is a housing affordability crisis in their LGA, but feel that there is not much that they can do.
- Awareness of the issue cannot translate into substantial action / practical policy.
- Strong sense that state and federal governments have to step up.