

# It takes a village

**Density, diversity and  
the new Australian dream.**





# Foreword

**Sandra Brewer**  
Executive Director  
Property Council of Australia (WA)

**Housing affordability matters very much to the Property Council. It is, in fact, our number one advocacy priority.**

We promote policy solutions that will create a strong and stable pipeline of new housing supply to take the pressure off prices – understanding that the mix of chronic under-supply, excessive taxes and charges and inefficient planning systems have driven the cost of housing up.

But what does that have to do with density?

Density is one of the major factors affecting supply. Simply put, if access to land is limited – either by interventionist policy or community resistance – the price of land will escalate to the point where it's unaffordable for the next generation.

The size of the housing affordability problem in Perth depends on your perspective; but the fact is that the dwelling price to household income ratio remains at an historically high level. Doing nothing is likely to see affordability issues worsen.

In an examination of the range of policies that would improve housing affordability, the Grattan Institute found that the only one with a “very large” impact in increasing supply was improving density in middle suburbs.<sup>1</sup>

In Western Australia, homelessness and affordable housing advocates passionately agree.

It's also about delivering real housing choice – ensuring a diverse range of

living options and price points in all suburbs, allowing people to live close to where they work, where they grew up and where their family and friends' networks reside.

Governments of all persuasions know that increasing the amount of quality urban infill in Perth is a crucial means of achieving housing affordability and choice for future generations. But it's politically hard.

Despite leadership from the Government and property industry, a large part of the community remains uncertain about, or resistant to, increasing density in our suburbs.

In fact, in some cases that resistance translates to outright hostility – something many of our members have experienced firsthand on submitting plans for new developments in established suburbs.

When the benefits and importance of increasing density appear so clear, it's time we considered just why that is. Just perhaps, the property development industry and politicians haven't listened enough to what people want from their home and their suburb, and understood their perspective.

Beyond listening, maybe we need to do better at explaining what's meant by 'urban density', and what the benefits are to existing communities.

That's what this project is about.

We've listened to people from established suburbs across Perth. We've heard their fears, concerns and objections, and we've also heard what they want from their home and their community.

From this, we've identified a different way to talk about density – one that demystifies it, and allows people to appreciate it can actually help to deliver the very things they want from their lifestyle and their suburb.

**Our aim is for this research to provide a language for leaders. To change density from being a dirty word. To reassure the community that we are prepared to ensure density is something that happens with them, not to them; that it can bring people together, for good.**

Strong communities feature strong connections – between generations, between neighbours, between destinations. They offer quality shared spaces enjoyed by all, vibrancy, and amenity. Density and diversity are key drivers for all of these things.

It takes a village to raise a community. Let's change the conversation around how we're shaping our city, and start to map the way forward together.

<sup>1</sup> Options for housing affordability: the good, the bad and the cosmetic, May 2017, by John Daley, Brendan Coates and Trent Wiltshire

# Introduction

We all know home means many things to many people. What we have in common, however, is a deep emotional connection to it.

This project did not focus solely on how to sell the virtues of urban density. Instead, it started with a question: what really matters to different people about where they live?

With those answers in hand, we then looked at the connection between what the community wants and how urban density could provide it.

Our research uncovered some tensions between what people wanted from quality of life, and their inherent belief that urban density would strip it away.

In reality, density offers an important way to deliver more of what people told us was most important in their homes and community – but it was apparent this is something not widely understood or appreciated.

This report unfolds the challenge, and the opportunity presented by bridging that gap.

## About the research process

This research was commissioned by the Property Council in November 2018, through Meerkats, a leading strategic communication agency. The goal was identified in the brief: [To identify optimal strategies to garner community support for urban density.](#)

This involved three main priorities:

To identify optimal strategies to garner community support for urban density		
<p><b>1. UNDERSTAND COMMUNITY NEEDS AND BARRIERS</b></p> <p>Understanding different community attitudes, inherent beliefs, needs and barriers that relate to urban density</p> <p>Broadly identifying different community audiences</p> <p>Distilling specific mindsets, needs and issues that really matter for each audience</p>	<p><b>2. REFRAME URBAN DENSITY</b></p> <p>Provide a way to reframe the public conversation around urban density to elevate and shift the way it is currently perceived</p> <p>Identify themes of conversation to build community support, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the key benefits and vision for urban density</li><li>• how to reframe and address key points of opposition</li></ul>	<p><b>3. FUTURE PROJECT/PHASE 2: IDENTIFY KEY ACTIONS TO GARNER SUPPORT</b></p> <p>Provide a broad engagement strategy to the community</p> <p>Recommend the optimal strategies and actions to achieve our aim</p>

A working group was convened by the Property Council to monitor the project and provide constructive feedback along the way. This group included representatives from:

- LandCorp
- Department of Planning, Lands and Heritage
- Chair of the Residential Committee
- Chair of the Planning Committee
- Shelter WA
- Cannings Purple

The process involved an initial desktop review of all existing information, including media coverage and public commentary, that captured the current state of public opinion and attitudes around urban density in WA.

In the second stage, we completed face-to-face interviews with 16 key stakeholders (from Government agencies, media and the property industry) with an understanding of the challenges and opportunities.

Then, taking the insights from this research, we completed in-depth interviews with a representative group of the general public. This process wasn't about compiling numbers or statistics, but to explore in depth the attitudes, opinions and thoughts held by individuals in areas across Perth.

# Part one: Urban density attitudes, concerns and desires

## What the community thinks about urban density

Conversations with community members showed the term 'urban density' typically evoked negative connotations. Participants were asked what the term brought to mind, and to draw an image depicting their view of density.

## What do you think of when you think urban density?

- Apartments, high-rises and subdivisions
- Destruction and loss of open space
- More people in small areas
- All the same
- Lack of planning
- Lower socio-economic residents
- Everything you need is close

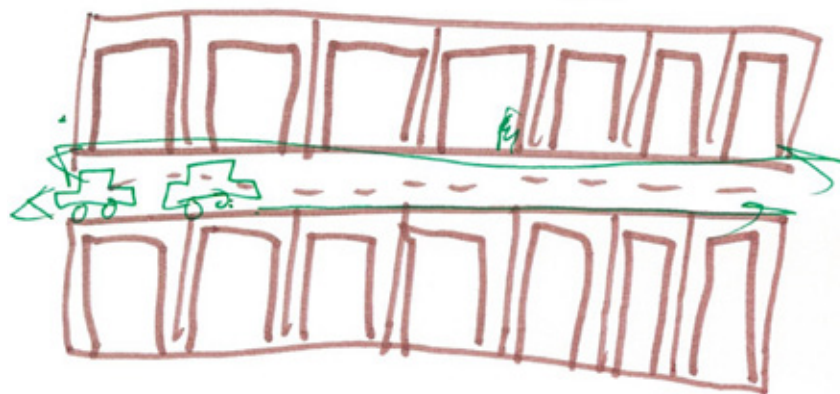
However, other depictions highlighted different attitudes. Some designed amenities and space first, then integrated houses into the area.

**"I would envisage the medium sort of height buildings which are residential ... At the bottom of those I would envisage restaurants, retailers, people, sort of more public spaces for use and then the residential."**



"I pictured Subiaco, the oval where they're building all the flats around it ... Things like Subiaco Markets being done up. There's all the units. There are cafes and shops and things like that. And green space. Somewhere (people) can go. So even though they are building up, they are leaving space for that."

While others drew pictures of tight, cramped blocks.



**"It makes me think of overcrowding. That there's no space."**

**"A tightly-packed neighbourhood where no-one has any yard, your house takes up 99% of your block, you're up against the boundary everywhere you turn, and quite deliberately, there are no trees on that street. People are all inside. They're all squished in."**

Another clear theme that emerged from conversations with participants was that the community couldn't easily reference a proven track record of urban density in Perth.

While they could point to and recognise what they saw as quality examples of density in other cities around the world, there was a sense that this was lacking here – that it was difficult to point to a great example of density done well, and that we still had a way to go in this area.

Participants described urban density in Perth as “slow to take off”, “too dense”, “out of place” and “not thought through or supported”.

“I think it's not set up here as well as some of the places, but I think that's to do with the fact that it's not as established.”

On the flip side, there was an acknowledgement that “it's working in some places”.

“Northbridge... **everything is developed around it.** They've got all the **restaurants and ... transport** coming and going all the time. It's a buzzing little place, 24/7 isn't it? It's a very **active and lively** environment.”

When it came to what people wanted to see more of, there was clear consensus on a number of points. Participants rated culture and lifestyle-oriented amenities, open space and parklands, affordable housing options, contextually-appropriate design and car-free zones/good public transport links as the most important elements for their communities.

“It's not just about making an area that's a little bit more dense with another shopping centre or a few more houses or medium rise apartment blocks ... **It's actually about replicating what people do in life here.**”

“**Not just creating apartments, creating areas** – so below the apartments there's restaurants and commercial space, and get offices in those buildings as well ... **then it just brings more people, there's more life to it.** It's not just a 30-storey building that's all apartments.”





Of course, not all density is the same. Participants had a clear sense of medium density and high density, and a preference for the former – describing it as “not too high and not too low” and “probably the best”.

### Medium density: Offers the freedom to live an active lifestyle outside the home

Melbourne



North Perth



#### What would it be like to live here?

Young small families  
Like-minded professionals

Going out (rather than spending time at home)

There is an active social life at their doorstep

Sense of freedom to do what you want

#### What might be the advantages of living here?

Relatively bigger, maybe a courtyard

Right size to foster neighbourhood connection and with knowing your neighbours you feel safer

More privacy, less noise than higher density

Bit more upmarket

#### What might be the disadvantages of living here?

Traffic

Congestion

Lack of parking

Other people's noise

Not enough space for kids, pets, a backyard for them to play

### High density: Working and going out – lively, noisy, hectic

London



Northbridge



#### What would it be like to live here?

More transient  
Renters  
Loud, rough young people

Working and going out,  
Working and going out...

It's lively,  
It's noisy,  
It's hectic

#### What might be the advantages of living here?

Bring more amenities in easy reach with plenty more to do

Relatively small, with not much of a garden. Doesn't have to be a bad thing...  
It means low upkeep.

Apartments feel secure

Higher quality, boutique apartments are more acceptable

#### What might be the disadvantages of living here?

More concern around the invasion of privacy and hearing other people's noises

Traffic

Congestion

Lack of parking

Lack of character

Don't want to sacrifice the relative reduction of their own space when compared to a house

With regard to both medium and high density, there was a recognition from participants that their own suburb could benefit from more amenities, such as cafes and shops, if they had higher density in their neighbourhood.

The biggest disparity in perspective uncovered by conversations with community members was around whether urban density promoted safety, or compromised it.

Some believed that having more people around as a result of increased density meant more people looking out for each other – representing safety in numbers.

Others, however, associated higher density with having more transient and less trustworthy neighbours.

# Part two: Aligning the strengths of urban density to quality of life issues and desires

When people are choosing where to live, what's really important to them?  
 What really matters to their quality of life, and how can urban density help – or hinder?  
 What do Perth people want when it comes to their home and their suburb?

This research identified six main drivers:

- 1** Safety
- 2** Getting around
- 3** Cultural vibe
- 4** Sense of community
- 5** Finding sanctuary
- 6** Affordability

## Perception: How urban density impacts on what's important to people

Theme	Safety	Getting around	Cultural vibe	Sense of community	Finding sanctuary	Affordability
What's important where people live	Feeling secure at home  Feeling safe, going out and walking the streets	Easily getting to where you need to go (walk, cycle, quick drive, public transport)  Close to school, work, beach, cafe  Doing what you want on a whim	Having access to a choice of culture and arts, recreation	Having friends and family nearby  Connected to the community, knowing neighbours  Help when needed (someone has your back)	Reliving childhood – freedom of open space and big backyards  Time to potter in garden, at home  Escaping to bush, beach, river, cafes	Being able to afford your own home with access to all of this
What affects quality of life where they live	Feeling scared and exposed at home  Not trusting the people in their suburb, feeling unsafe to walk or leave their car	Lack of public transport connections  Can't get from A-B on bike paths  Stressful time in traffic, parking issues	Youth finding Perth 'so boring.'  Leaving Perth in our 20s for more action  Places 'dead at night', not open on a Monday	Not trusting neighbours  Feeling isolated  Feeling far from friends and family	Privacy invaded by noisy neighbours	Giving up the dream of affording their own home  Needing financial assistance from family to get into the area
Some believe urban density will amplify/cause these issues	Attracting riff-raff  Not knowing (trusting) neighbours	Increasing traffic and congestion in my area  Increasing strain on parking in my area		Over-crowding  Not knowing (trusting) neighbours	Fear of losing green space to subdivision  Fear of losing public open space	Density will send my property value down
Others believe urban density can enhance/provide what they want	Apartments are more secure  More eyes on the street, safety in numbers	More investment in infrastructure - public transport, bike paths  Takes pressure off the roads	More people makes business /events more viable – more choice/longer opening hours	Local events bring people together  More affordable to buy into area near friends and family	Better communal places for kids to play (skate parks, playgrounds)  More amenities at beach, river	Providing more choice of affordable homes

To shift the dial on feelings around density, we need to show how – with good design and planning – it can address these concerns, and provide the benefits the community want.

Ultimately, people told us they want:

**To feel secure at home and on the street**

“I think it actually probably does make me feel more safe (to live around more people). Living in the complex I can see everything. My neighbours are very close.”

“There is less sense of vulnerability ... if there’s thousands of people all doing their thing at the same time, I don’t feel as exposed or vulnerable.”

**Freedom to get around with ease**

“Nice places to escape to if you want to, if you want to go and have a lunch or a coffee. We can just do it on our bicycles.”

“Less stressful life, it’s just easy ... having more time for myself, being able to do what I actually want and not having to be running around doing errands.”

**A sense of community and neighbourhood connection**

“Our family lives 10 minutes from here ... you can pop around and keep connected with the family. We help (each other).”

“I think having the sense of community makes a big difference ... feeling like there’s other options – there’s other avenues for connections if you want them. I just think it could be quite isolating otherwise.”

**To be able to afford a home close to what matters**

“(I want to be able) to afford to live in Perth.”

“(I want to) buy a place just so I could have an input to how it looked and felt, more so than renting.”

**To respect our sense of space/place**

“When I was growing up, we could go and play in the streets and things like that, and it brought parents together ... we’d all sit out the front and talk, so engaging with others starts bringing in that community a bit more.”

“It’s not that far to go for a walk in the bush. The river’s not far away ... we’ve got some nice parks around.”

**To be able to pursue their choice of lifestyle/enjoy more of what Perth has to offer**

“Everything is close. It’s absolutely what I want. It’s good. I think everyone would benefit from that ... I like that.”

“Definitely better amenities, so shops, services, parks, things like that, that makes your life a lot easier and I think that comes back to less money on fuel and more money on (what you want to spend it on).”



## What makes Perth special?

Participants in our community conversations had a clear sense of Perth's cultural identity, and a strong belief that the future development of our city should not interfere with or alter that.

Perth residents identify our city as a friendly, laid back, beautiful place set on beach, river and bush, with an enviable lifestyle.

Conversations around urban density need to understand and respect this concept of cultural identity – and in describing their vision for the Perth of the future, participants showed how this could work.

## What's your vision for what it could be like to live in Perth in the future?

Participants described a strong preference for more connected activity 'hubs' in Perth, and more mixed-use developments.

"I'd like to see Perth a bit more like Melbourne, with the different suburbs being linked to each other by the public transport system."

"My vision for Perth is having a more intermingling city ... having more character and night life in a sense, where you could go to the beach not to just go to the beach but to do other things – go to a restaurant or café, and have some kind of activity going on down there."

There was also a desire to move towards a car-free future – with more connecting bike paths and opportunities to walk to amenities. Improved transport and links between suburbs were described, along with more cultural and arts activities to enjoy. The connection was made by participants that greater density and increased population hubs in Perth would bring more activity and vibrancy.

"I think in the future in Perth it would be nicer if our streets weren't quite as busy with cars ... I think that would reduce a lot of the stress that people have in terms of getting to work and getting back from work, you know, and put less strain on the freeways and roads and then less accidents and then maybe less road rage."

"Shops that stay open until 6pm, businesses being open for longer ... well, I guess we need demand for there to be supply. I don't know, I guess through new developments and getting people to move there ... it's just a bit of a barrier sometimes when you want to do something, and things just aren't open."

Maintaining green space was seen as essential, and more development of the beach and river was an attractive thought.

"You definitely need outdoor space, so even if you do live in an apartment ... that's probably what's required."

"I think more development on the river, better utilisation of that is important. It's just such a feature that we have that for the longest part wasn't really very well utilised."

Importantly, participants were really happy to see Perth 'move on', to evolve and embrace some new ways of living.

"So, I think people are happy with smaller space as long as they still have space ... I think most people are shifting, but Perth for some reason is just a lot slower than the rest of Australia."

"I think people can be scared of the whole (higher density) living by picturing some kind of concrete jungle city kind of thing, when I can see a way where it doesn't have to be like that. Just by travelling to different places and seeing how it works, and (that) we don't have to go all the way (down that path)."

# Part three: Reframing the conversation

## The challenge

Urban density in Perth is still in its infancy.

Perth people do not have a proven track record of quality examples to look towards.

There are preconceptions based on poor designs of the past, and this is preventing people from seeing the benefits.

## The opportunity

Build trust with the community by listening and responding to concerns and uncertainty.

Demonstrate how quality of life concerns and desires can be addressed with urban density done well.

Improve education and understanding about how urban density can improve lives.

## The strategic foundation

The foundation of this new conversation needs to be trust, so that we can begin to shift mindsets from “No” to “Yes, if”.

## Building the bridge to trust



# The steps





# A new outlook and mission

For too long, we have focused on the problems.

If we want people to see the benefits of urban density, we need to start leading with the opportunity, not the problem. Statements such as “we need to cut urban sprawl” are negative and don’t address a key question for the average member of the community: “what’s in it for me?”.

We need a new outlook that focuses on the opportunity to enhance lives.



We suggest a new mission for the property industry, State and Local Government:

## Creating greater living space with existing community

Quite simply, we need to plan, design and deliver better quality spaces that support and strengthen existing communities. We don’t profess to be “in” or “for” the community, but our mission speaks to a commitment to work with them to deliver the choice and lifestyle benefits they want.

It’s not a pipe dream. In reality, there are good examples around our city where sophisticated property developers have engaged with the local community and delivered a result that has enhanced their suburb.

### Problem-focused      Opportunity-focused

We need to accommodate our increasing population



We need to create greater living space with the community

We need to cut urban sprawl



We need to enhance living space in existing communities

## 2 A new language for urban density

High density = squished and cramped.

Infill = filling in space.

Where possible, we should be using

greater living space  
vibrant, connected living space  
well-designed living space  
community-oriented living space  
activity/community hubs

From

Urban density



To

greater living space  
well-designed living space  
community-oriented living space

But sometimes we'll need to be more specific...  
surrounding density with benefit-driven words

enhanced  
well-designed  
integrated  
community-oriented  
thoughtful  
well-connected

From

Urban infill



To

creating more living space in existing communities

Urban density



enhanced density  
well-designed density  
integrated density  
thoughtful density  
well-connected density

Medium density is more acceptable, especially  
when surrounded by benefit-driven words.

medium-density living  
medium-density space  
medium-density design  
medium-density hubs

From

Medium density



To

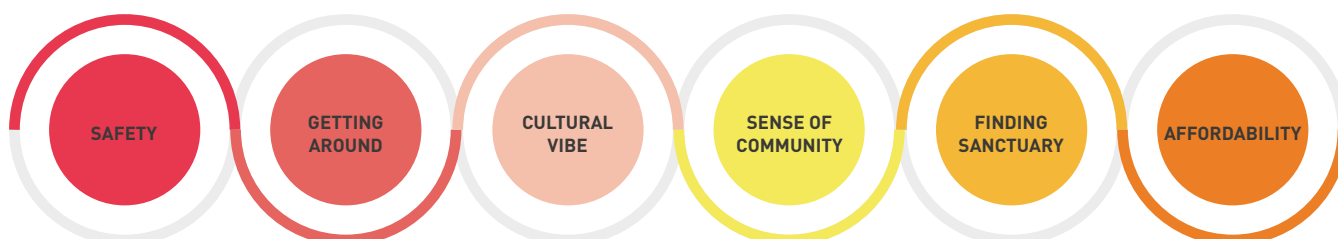
medium-density living  
medium-density space  
medium-density design  
medium-density hubs



### 3 Align benefits with what the community wants

Urban density can provide the benefits the community wants – we just need to talk about them more.

#### Linking community needs to the strengths of urban density



Safety through passive surveillance	Improved transport nodes in my area	Generating business viability	Community-oriented space	Rejuvenating character and open space	Choice of home options in existing areas
Having more eyes on the street to watch out for each other. People feel less exposed and vulnerable with more people around.	More people makes it viable to provide more frequent and connected public transport. More rate-payers means more money for walk/bike paths.	Well-designed living spaces pay homage to an area and make it viable for existing and new shops, cafes, services to thrive and stay open longer.	Enables people to come together more easily, to get the jobs and the housing and the shops and the whole mix of uses that you need together.	Well-designed living spaces pay homage and rejuvenate, not diminish, the unique character of the area, be it beaches, parkland or heritage buildings.	Economising on space reduces the cost to buy into the area.

#### Urban density benefit messaging



## 4 Respect needs

In order to begin to build the bridge of trust, we need to acknowledge and appeal to different mindsets in the community, and respect their needs.

**“Urban density creates change ... whether you like it, or not.”**

Here lies the first variable of community mindsets towards urban density:

Resistant to change in my community	Open to possibility of change in my community
<p>“I don’t trust property developers and the Government can manage to preserve what’s important.”</p> <p>“I want our community to stay how it is.”</p> <p>“I feel angry, frustrated with the lack of control. I fear what we’ll lose.”</p> <p>“Help me preserve what we’ve got.”</p>	<p>“I believe when it’s done right, more development and people can enhance my life and our community.”</p> <p>“I want our community to thrive.”</p> <p>“I am optimistic about the possibilities of development, but frustrated Perth doesn’t move on.”</p> <p>“Help improve and grow what we’ve got.”</p>

The second key variable of community mindsets towards density relates to whether people place a higher value on their life inside or outside of the home.

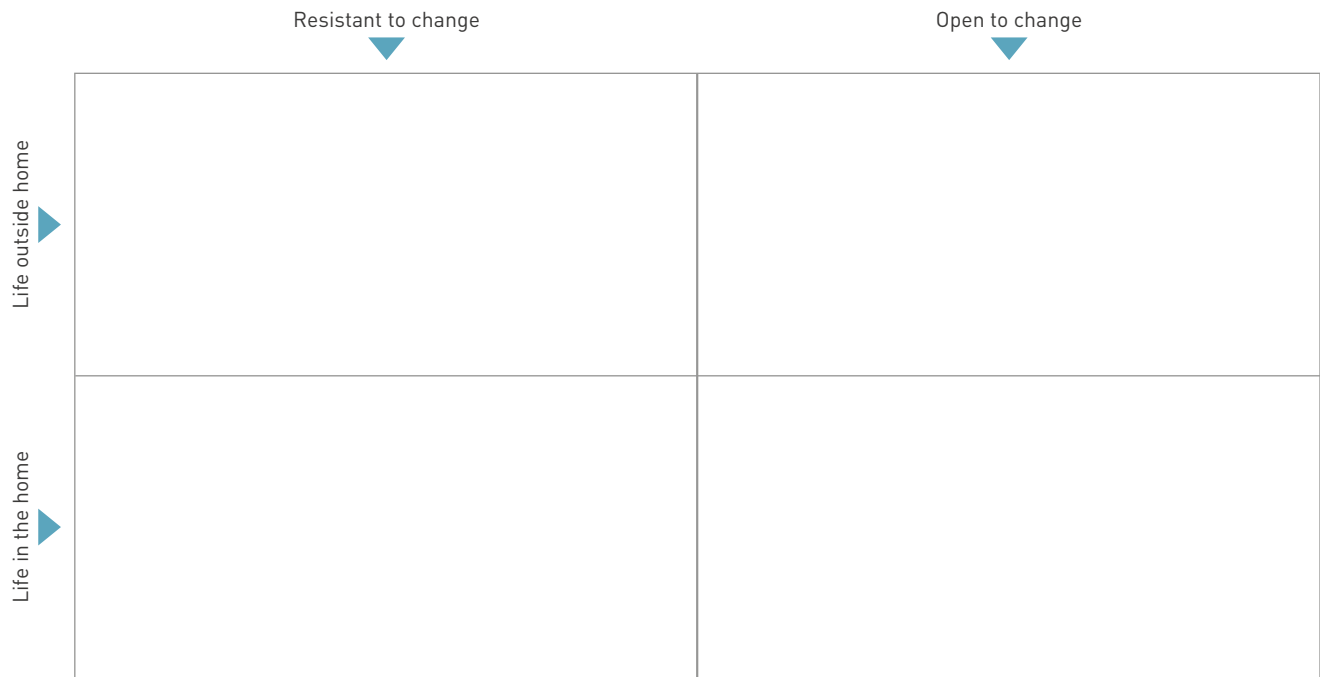
Some value the sanctum of their own personal space, while others prefer to get out amongst it.

**“The houses we live in are not necessarily where we feel most at home. Many of us have special spaces and places that answer a deeper and more emotional need in us than the need for somewhere to live.”**

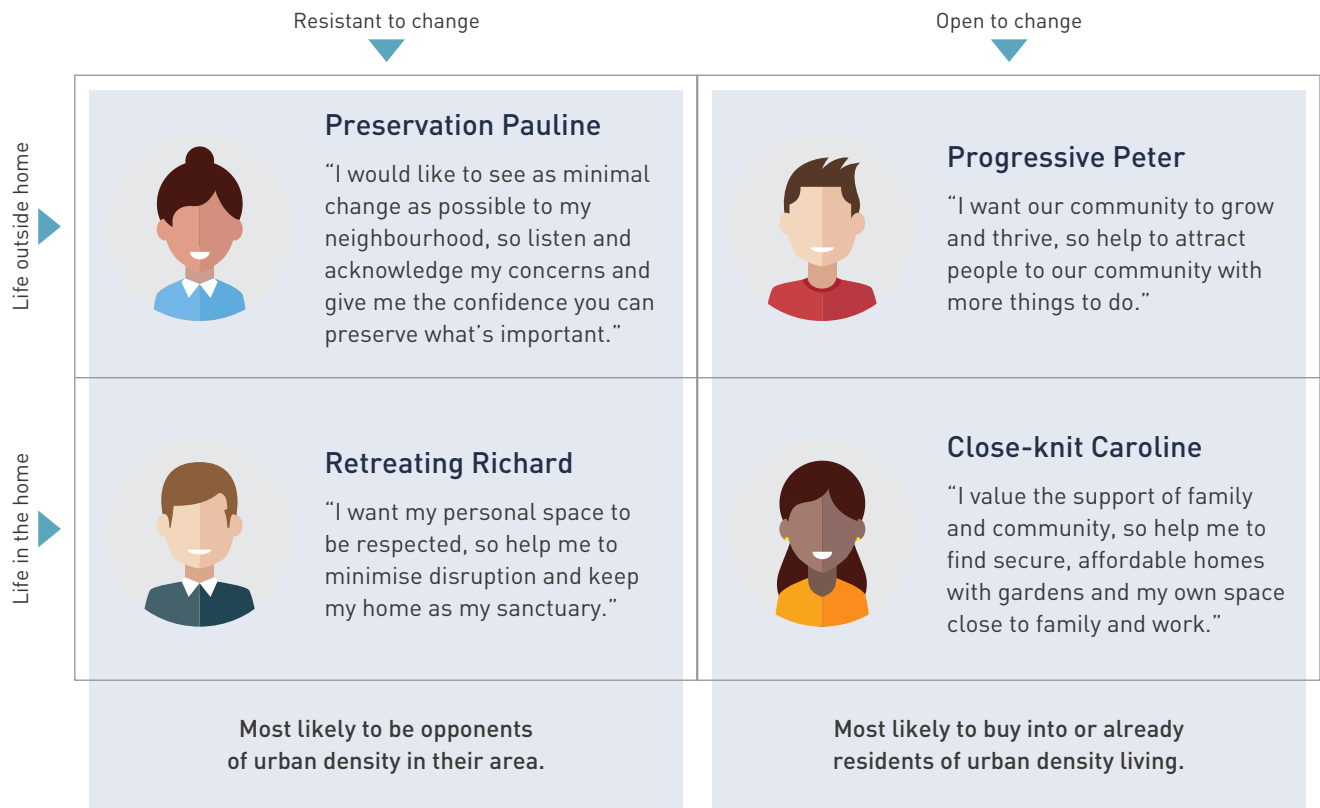
– Hugh Mackay

Values life at home	Values life outside home
<p>“Home is my sanctuary.”</p> <p>Passionate about own space: gardening, privacy, space for kids.</p> <p>Typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reliving the past/childhood</li> <li>• Desires the ¼-acre block</li> <li>• Doesn’t want a hectic life.</li> </ul>	<p>“Home is where the heart is.”</p> <p>Passionate about social connection.</p> <p>Culture, cafes, restaurants, beach, river.</p> <p>Typically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeks more to do</li> <li>• Desires more activity, longer opening hours</li> <li>• Desires better transport and walkability.</li> </ul>

From these responses, we can develop a segmentation of community mindsets around density on the following axis:



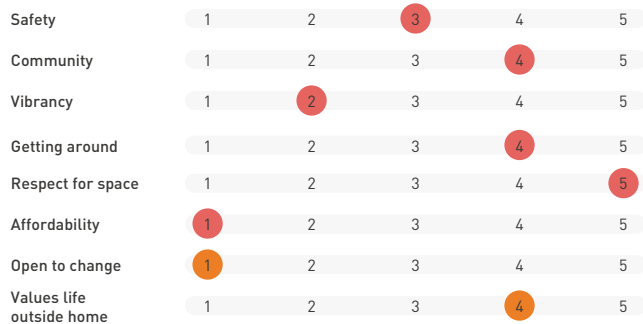
And from here, based on the views and input of our community participants, we are able to develop four essential personas to represent the segmentation of mindsets around density:





## Preservation Pauline

"I would like to see as minimal change as possible to my neighbourhood."



### Nostalgic:

"I would like to replicate for (my kids) as much as possible the very open country life childhood that I had."

Willing to fight to preserve the neighbourhood character and green, open space.

### Current Engagement:

- Complaints against proposed development. Attending council meetings, signing petitions, writing letters to the newspaper and joining social media activist groups. #SaveSubi #SaveSouthPerth.
- Feels public comment and wishes are being blatantly ignored.
- Does not feel plans are well thought through.
- Suspects 'under the table' negotiations are going on between developers and council.

### Mindset

Fixed mindset, resistant to change.

Development destroys the character and green, open space in my neighbourhood.

"I don't trust property developers and the government can manage to preserve what's important."

### Concerns

Wants their neighbourhood to stay how it is:

- "I want restrictions and limits to preserve what we've got."
- Wishes being ignored by council.
- Ugly buildings that are too high.
- Attracts lower socio-economic and crime.
- Losing green open space and big blocks in my suburb.
- Losing character of my suburb.

"I don't want to live in another big city."

### Desired Benefits

Wants restrictions and limits to preserve the character of their suburb:

- Platform for feedback.
- Limits and restrictions on new development.
- 'Mild' development.

"Listen and acknowledge my concerns. Give me the confidence you can preserve the character of our suburb and open space with new developments."



## Progressive Peter

"I want our community to grow and thrive."



### Progressive:

"There's a misconception that the four by two house is the best way to live. It is not the only way that Australians should live."

Has seen or experienced how urban density can work when done well, typically elsewhere.

Frustrated by people that are holding back Perth's progress.

### Current Engagement:

- Socially active in the community, supporting new businesses and events.
- Spreading the word about new things happening in Perth.
- Signing petitions to support development.
- #PerthisOk #SoPerth.

### Mindset

- Growth mindset, open to possibility.
- Development fosters a thriving community in my neighbourhood.
- Perth is my backyard.
- "I believe when it's done right, more development and people can enhance my life and our community."

### Concerns

Feeling that Perth is stuck in the ¼-acre block mentality. This is preventing Perth from growing positively.

- Stigma attached to high density.
- People in Perth stuck in their ways (Nanny state).
- Ugly, 'cookie-cutter' designs.
- Feeling safe to get around.
- Lack of supermarkets nearby "I don't want to live in another big city."

### Desired Benefits

I want more people, young and old, out and about enjoying what Perth has to offer.

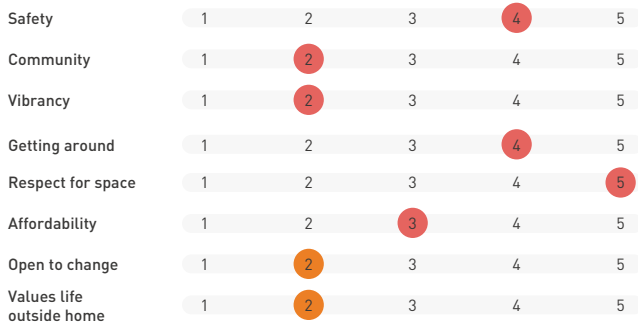
- Being close to my interests (beach, restaurants, events).
- Variety of recreational options.
- Businesses open longer.
- Community events.
- Low maintenance home.
- Safe to walk the streets.

"Support more things to do in Perth."



## Retreating Richard

"I want my personal space and privacy to be respected."



### Traditionalist:

"It's not a lifestyle I'd procure. You're talking to the unconverted."

Feels their right to personal space and privacy at home is being invaded.

### Current Engagement:

- Making complaints about noise from neighbours or noise and lack of parking on his street due to businesses around his home.

### Mindset

Fixed mindset, resistant to change.

Development encroaches on my personal space.

"I don't want to hear other people's business."

### Concerns

Annoyed by people intruding on their personal space at home.

- Noisy, disruptive neighbours.
- Congestion, lack of parking.
- Not knowing/trusting neighbours.
- Lack of planning.
- Monetarily motivated developments.
- Loss of public open space.

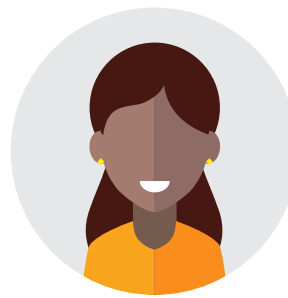
"Continual rezoning is invading my personal space."

### Desired Benefits

I want to be able to get in and out and get my essentials done with minimal fuss so I can head back home.

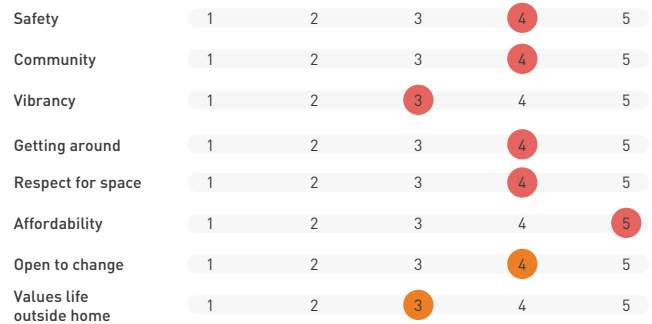
- Peaceful environment.
- Time at home to potter in my garden or other hobbies.
- Ease of getting around to do my essentials.

"Help me to minimise disruption and keep my home as my sanctuary."



## Close-knit Caroline

"I value the support of family and community."



### Close to home/connected:

"It's important to live five minutes from my sister, and Mum's just around the corner."

Values close connections with family, friends and community, looking out for each other.

### Current Engagement:

- Have looked to 'buy into' a suburb to be close to family, schools, work.
- Enquired about price range, space, specifically garden/yard options and security.

### Mindset

Home is where the heart is.

Development opens up the opportunity to live closer to family and work.

"I believe more development could make it affordable for more people to live close to family and work."

### Concerns

A lot of families are struggling to afford homes near work and family. There aren't a lot of medium density options with a bit of your own space, like a garden.

- Home affordability.
- Lack of garden/backyard/trees options in compact homes, apartments.
- Overcrowding schools.
- Transient neighbours, crime.
- Feeling safe at home.

### Desired Benefits

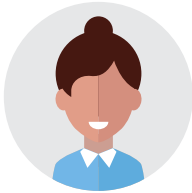




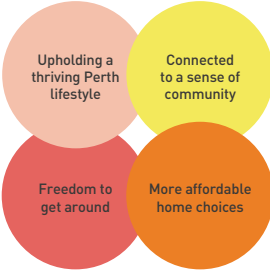


Want their own personal space, close to family, friends, work and school.

- Living close to my family, friends.
- Living close to good schools.
- Outdoor space.
- Knowing neighbours 'have your back'.
- Secure home.

"Help me to find secure, affordable homes with gardens and my own space close to family and work."



## How to communicate with our different mindsets

PERSONA	 Preservation Pauline	 Progressive Peter	 Retreating Richard	 Close-knit Caroline
NEEDS	"I would like to see as minimal change as possible to my neighbourhood, so <b>listen and acknowledge my concerns and give me the confidence you can preserve what's important.</b> "	"I want our community to grow and thrive, so <b>help to attract people to our community with more things to do.</b> "	"I want my personal space to be respected, so <b>help me minimise disruption and keep my home as my sanctuary.</b> "	"I value the support of family and community so <b>help me to find homes with gardens and my own space close to family and work.</b> "
MESSAGING	Promote 2-way feedback, specifically addressing how to preserve open space and character: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Open conversations to create greater living spaces in our community.</li><li>Open minds to creating new living spaces that respect community character.</li><li><b>We are open to your feedback: #OpenSubi, #OpenSouthPerth</b></li></ul>	Promote great things happening in the community and invite new ideas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Open conversations to create greater living spaces in our community.</li><li>Open to new ideas to grow community culture.</li><li>Open to longer opening hours in our community.</li><li><b>Spread the word about awesome Perth: #OpenPerth, #PerthIsMyBackyard</b></li></ul>	Promote 2-way feedback, specifically addressing how to minimise disruption from neighbours and business activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Open to new living that respects our sense of space.</li><li>Open conversations to create greater living space in our community.</li><li><b>We are open to your feedback: #OpenSubi, #OpenSouthPerth</b></li></ul>	Promote a greater choice of secure, affordable, community-oriented options: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>We're open to improving the choice of living spaces in our community.</li><li>We're open to the possibilities of well designed apartment gardens/space.</li><li>Creating closer communities.</li><li><b>Come see more home choices in your suburb</b></li></ul>
	Demonstrate thoughtful planning and preservation considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Living space thoughtfully designed with our community.</li><li>Some medium density.</li></ul>	Demonstrate support for businesses and events: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creating living spaces that foster our community culture and thriving businesses.</li></ul>	Demonstrate thoughtful planning and privacy considerations: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Living space thoughtfully designed with our community.</li><li>Some medium density.</li></ul>	Demonstrate support for greater affordable home choices and community initiatives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Setting a new standard of affordable home choices in your suburb.</li></ul>
				



## 5

## Living proof

Perceptions around urban density are driven by what the Perth community are exposed to. As an industry, we should crowd out bad examples with good.

We know urban density done well can give the community what they want. We increase our chances of gaining community support if we design living spaces around these needs and concerns.

Fortunately – for the industry, Government and the community – we are at an important juncture. A new suite of planning policies will be launched in 2019 under the title of 'Design WA'. This policy sets clear standards for apartment development across the State, ensuring good design is at the heart of all projects.

The fundamental goal of Design WA is the creation of built environments that reflect the distinctive characteristics of a local area, enhance streetscapes and neighbourhoods, and contribute to the creation and growth of vibrant, diverse and livable communities.

From this time forward, all new property developments will need to comply with the parameters set by Design WA – ensuring the delivery of sustainable, liveable, quality projects that meet community expectations. The industry should promote the compliance of their projects with this policy at every opportunity.



## This is not the conclusion...

In the face of uncertainty or entrenched opposition, it can be hard for a property developer or politician to find the right words to reassure the community.

After all, density is perceived as a threat to their dreams for their home, their life and their suburb.

This research has identified what drives people in forming those perceptions. It provides a segmentation based on their desire for a life predominantly inside or outside of their home, and their openness or resistance to change.

It's worth noting that those who seek to increase density in Perth will never appease everyone.

Our findings underline the challenge of convincing those who don't want to see change of the benefits that can be delivered by urban density – even when they appear to be indisputable.

But it also reveals a large proportion of the population that will be open to supporting density, provided it meets their expectations.

For policy makers and industry, the opportunity is clear: if we want to shift the dial on density, and begin to build that bridge of trust, it's time to talk about it in a more positive way.

About benefits, not problems.  
About what it can do for a suburb, a community, a family, an individual.

About building connections, revitalising neighbourhoods, and creating choice, convenience and vibrancy in new urban villages.

And about the changing shape of the great Australian dream, and its expansion to take in not only the traditional suburban quarter-acre block but also the terrace home, apartment, maisonette or villa.

A genuine conversation requires good communication. It requires both speaking and listening, and a willingness to take on board different points of view.

**It's time to start a real and constructive conversation about the future of our city, and how we live in it – and this research report provides the tools to begin.**



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