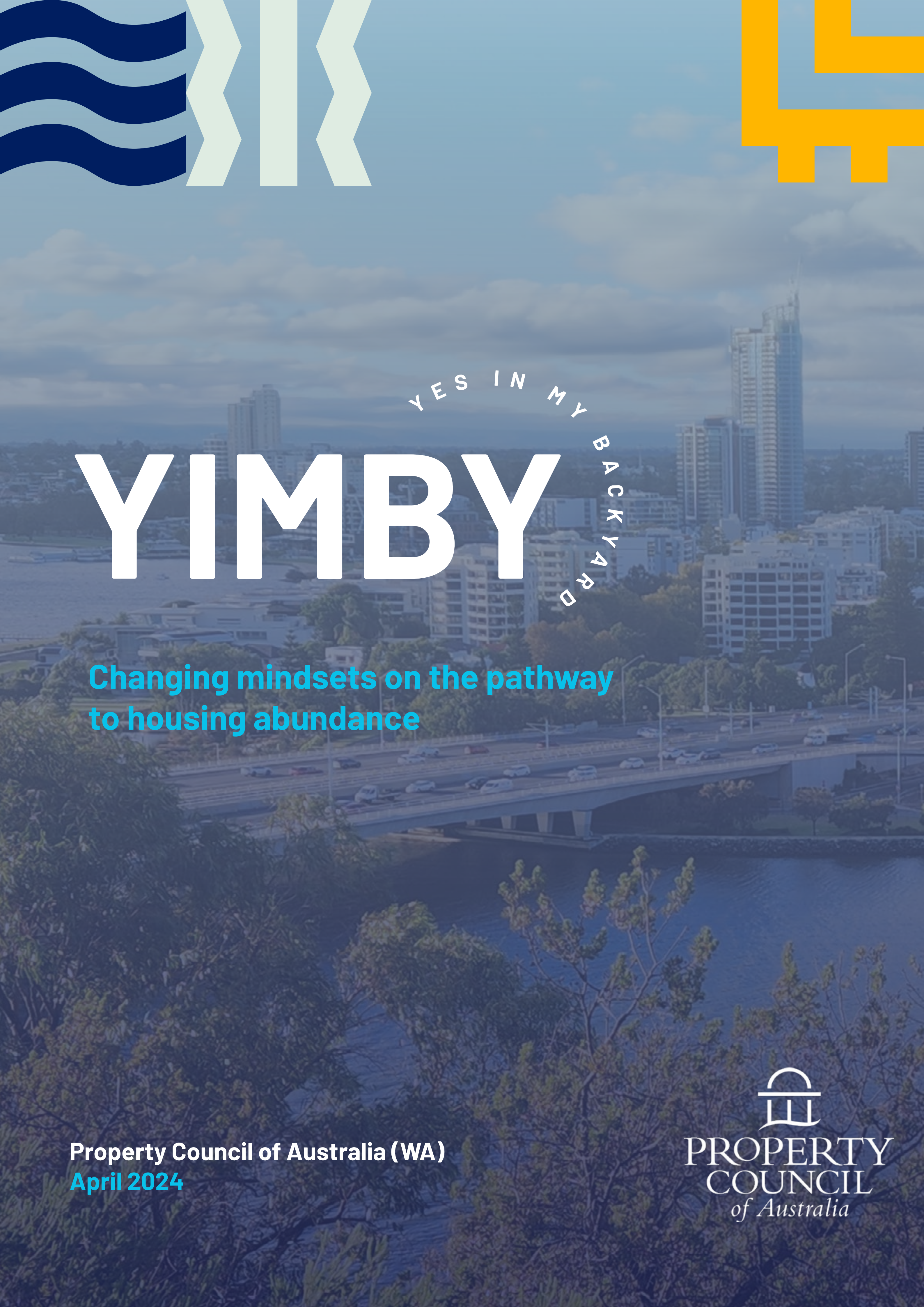


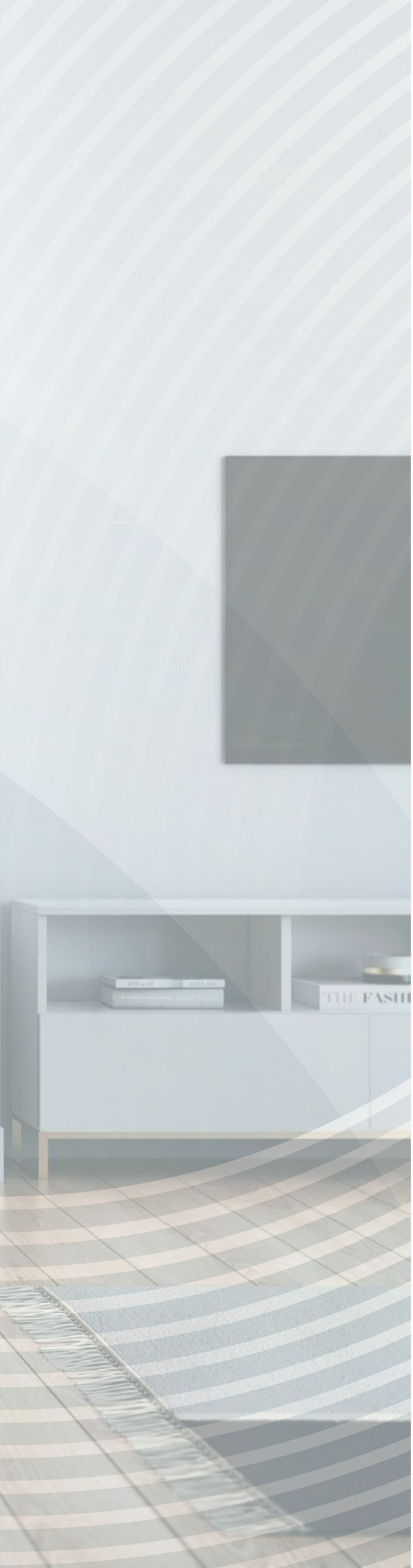
YES IN MY BACKYARD

YIMBY

Changing mindsets on the pathway to housing abundance

Property Council of Australia (WA)
April 2024

PROPERTY COUNCIL of Australia



Contents

Contributions

The Property Council has prepared this research report with the assistance of The APP Group. We thank stakeholders across industry, government and the community for their various contributions to the research.

The APP Group

Artwork created by proud Wiradjuri woman, Lani Balzan in 2021.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Property Council acknowledges the tens of thousands of years of continuous custodianship and placemaking by First Nations peoples and their proud role in our shared future.

We thank them for their custodianship of Country - land, seas and skies.

We acknowledge the diversity of First Nations cultures, histories and peoples, and we pay our deepest respects to Elders past and present.

Winhanga-Duri-Nya
Meaning "reflect", Wiradjuri language

Photo credit (and cover): Brendan Hardwick

Foreword

Western Australia has fallen behind in the delivery of new homes, and the shortfall is set to increase by a further 25,000 homes by the end of 2027.

Overcoming this challenge is going to need the collective effort of the entire WA community – the state government and private sector can't do it alone.

We must be unequivocal, housing is a community problem, and it requires a community solution. An overhaul in thinking is needed to help us deliver the homes needed to house every West Australian.

Community objections to new developments in existing communities slow down the delivery of new homes. When we say no to good development, for fear of change or personal interest, we must consider what we are excepting in return.

Less home means more homelessness, harder rental conditions, rising prices. A lack of housing diversity means people, young and old, don't have the means or opportunity to stay in the communities they love, close to the people and amenity that matters to them.

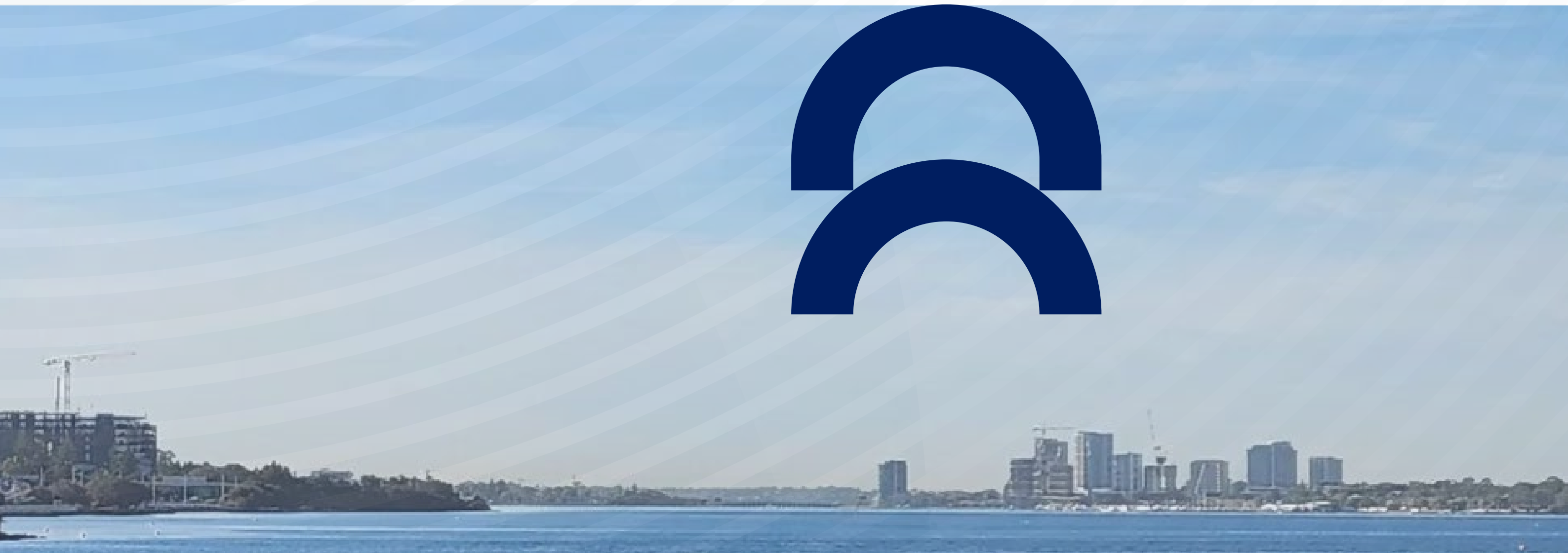
Too often objections are based on myths and fundamental misconceptions of what diversity means for a local community.

It's time to change the conversation and say, 'Yes In My Backyard'. This research explores, challenges, and debunks these myths and misconceptions, and sets in place a plan to support housing abundance in WA.

Together we can change the conversations and start saying 'yes' more to new housing projects in our communities.

Emily Young

Interim Executive Director
Property Council of Australia (WA)



A global movement with local relevance

As Perth's population growth rate outpaces the rest of Australia, the need to house more people, more efficiently, is as great as ever. However, whilst mini-skylines are starting to rise throughout the metropolitan area, the vast proportion of new housing is being built on the urban fringe – and opportunities are being missed to deliver more housing in established areas.

Perth benefits from an efficient and systemised land development process that has played an important role in maintaining the city's relative national affordability. At the same time, it is important to ensure that infill housing can compete on an even playing field, and that opportunities for new, existing and prospective residents to live closer to employment, transport and community infrastructure are not lost.

It is for this reason that the Property Council commissioned research to:

- ***Understand*** the misconceptions, myths and exaggerations held across the community and stakeholders that may be impeding, delaying or shrinking infill development at all phases of the planning and development cycle.
- ***Profile*** the YIMBY movement that is well-established in North America and Europe, and is rapidly gaining pace in the Eastern States and New Zealand.
- ***Explore*** how YIMBY-driven policy outcomes and philosophies could aid Perth's housing crisis, building on the existing extensive reforms, projects and initiatives by the WA Government, industry, and many local governments.

Core themes of YIMBYism

Work the system

Training and informing like-minded people to utilise existing engagement processes and forums to advocate for housing abundance outcomes.

Exposure and deconstruction of the impact of anti-housing decisions, positions and frameworks.

Housing abundance

Unabashed focus on supply-side housing policy mechanisms – whilst understanding the complex and varied influences on housing systems and markets.

Belief that all forms of housing are positive and play an essential role in the overall market.

Challenge existing controls and philosophies

Questioning established practices like broad-scale low-density zoning, expansive character protections, complex and subjective values-based design controls, and concentration of density on major roads or discreet areas to 'protect' neighbourhoods.

Housing is everything

A collective understanding and communication of the impact of housing costs and access on all aspects of the human experience and our cities. This includes the varied impacts on social cohesion, economic mobility, job access, families and fertility, and mental health.

> *Platitudes about housing affordability aren't enough, you've got to prioritise policies which actually get housing built in volume.*
>
> *@SydneyYIMBY, X, February 24 2024*

What does it all mean?

Diverse and counter views to political and planning orthodoxy have existed well before the rise of housing philosophy acronyms. In recent years, divergence between pro-development and anti-development groups and sentiments has been increasingly profiled as a battle between YIMBYs and NIMBYs respectively.

Behind these terms are complex social, economic and cultural drivers that can provide fertile ground for political and community conflict. Many of the underlying sentiments of both camps are grounded in divergent views of how cities should reflect community values and aspirations.

Key terms used in this research report

YIMBY | *Yes in my backyard*

YIMBYism is a movement and perspective that is centred on increasing housing supply – particularly in urban contexts and where housing intensification is or was historically restricted.

The movement can have generational overtones and appears to be most evident in the Anglosphere. YIMBYism can be observed via organised and semi-organised groups, shifting perspectives of politicians and policymakers, and increased community desire for action in response to regional and nationwide housing crises.

The movement incorporates an interesting fusion of libertarian and social justice motivators that transcends traditional political categorisation.

NIMBY | *Not in my backyard*

NIMBYism is a broad term used to categorise action and sentiment that in general opposes substantial change in existing built-up areas and/or is extremely cautious about the impacts of significant change and growth on existing community fabric and ways of life.

Whilst having some roots in efforts to protect vulnerable residents and areas of significant heritage value, NIMBYism is often associated with exaggerated arguments to protect the status quo and narrow economic interests.

NIMBYism can manifest itself in broadscale planning and character controls, processes and regulations that discourage infill housing, in organised community groups, and in broader community and political sentiment.

Infill housing

For this report, infill has been considered as development of new housing within the existing urban footprint of Perth, particularly in well-established areas – including:

- Development of existing vacant land.
- Transition and renewal of existing developed land.
- Intensification of existing land utilised for housing.

Greenfield housing

In contrast, greenfield housing is considered as development of new housing beyond the existing urban footprint of Perth – typically in the form of expanded and new suburbs on the edges of the existing built-up area of the city. This typically occurs on rural land or virgin bushland.

A local and national housing crisis

We are not building enough homes

Australia and Perth are experiencing rapid population growth as immigration surges post-pandemic. Regardless of the recent surge, Australia has been a high-growth country for decades compared to its OECD peers. Combined with demographic shifts such as smaller household sizes, housing supply needs to outpace population growth to keep up. This has not happened. Australia and Perth are facing a housing supply crunch of historical proportions that necessitates an urgent, comprehensive policy response.

In its recent pre-election platform, Prosperity Through Property, the Property Council laid out the facts of the housing challenges facing Perth and WA, including existing and projected growing gaps between dwellings in WA expected to be completed in coming years, and dwellings needed.

Perth is growing faster than predicted

Directions 2031 and Beyond | *2010*

Planning strategy forecasts

2.2m - 2.88m
by *2031*

2.31 million

Greater Perth population as of June 2023

ABS, March 2024 [6]

Network City | *2004*

2.39m
by *2031*

Peth and Peel @ 3.5million | *2018*

2.9m
by *2031*

3.5m
by *2050*

The housing crisis in numbers

0.75 per cent

Perth rental vacancy rate

PropTrack, March 2024 [1]

July 2012

The last time national monthly dwelling approvals were as low

ABS, April 2024 [2]

86 per cent

Increase in median unit rent in Perth since 2018

REIWA, April 2024 [3]

24,808

Potential WA dwelling shortfall by 2027

Property Council of Australia (WA), February 2024 [4]

61 per cent

Perth residents who say increasing affordable rentals is extremely important

SECNewgate, February 2024 [5]

81,318

Greater Perth's population increase in the 12 months to June 2023

ABS, March 2024 [6]

Current government responses to the housing crisis

Governments across Australia are responding to the housing crisis through various policy levers and interventions. The scale of the problem and the potency of community sentiment for action, however, means that ongoing exploration of more impactful solutions must continue.

Reform

Reforming planning processes, including new centralised decision-making pathways.

Broadscale planning uplift and reviews.

Rental market regulation.

Innovation & red tape removal

Rationalising BTR treatment.

Modular construction and alternate housing forms.

New tenure arrangements.

Community housing provider and developer collaboration.

Capacity growth

Skilled migration.

Training and apprenticeship programs, incentives, and funding.

Strategic planning support.

Community housing sector funding and support.

Goal setting & leadership

National Housing Accord.

Housing targets, audits, and improved reporting.

Housing Australia – building capacity, financial support, and various programs.

Investment

New social and affordable housing projects.

Plugging project viability gaps.

Funding enabling infrastructure.

Accelerated land release and disposal initiatives.

Government financial pathways and loan products.

Notable initiatives across Australia

Government of Western Australia

- Major funding increases for social housing.
- Significant Development Pathway for major projects.
- Stamp duty relief.
- Residential construction workforce investment.
- New Housing Supply Unit in Treasury.
- Infrastructure Development Fund to unlock land/projects.
- Tiny Homes investments.
- Ongoing and expanded successful Keystart program.
- Direct project support such as that provided for 195 Pier Street.

Queensland Government

- Incentivising Infill Fund/ Catalyst Infrastructure Fund for infrastructure cost relief.
- New Ground Lease Model for social and affordable homes on government land.
- Statutory dwelling supply targets.
- State Facilitated Development Team, including new priority pathway.
- Long-term 53,500 2046 social housing target.

NSW Government

- Transport-oriented development major rezoning precincts around 31+ train stations.
- Expanded planning incentives for projects with affordable housing.
- Expanded eligibility for State Significant Development approval pathway.
- Government land audit.
- Housing Infrastructure Fund to unlock land and projects.
- Proposed pattern book for endorsed infill housing designs.

Tasmanian Government

- Housing was a major focus in the recent state election.
- New state-wide single planning scheme.
- New peak body, Homes Tasmania.
- ModHomes pre-fabricated social housing rollout.
- Promise for density incentive grants up to $10,000 per unit for developers.
- Promise to pre-purchase 10 per cent off-the-plan for dwellings for affordable housing in some developments.
- Proposed KeyHomes program with equity support for local government housing projects.

Supply is the remedy

Supply-side measures are the gateway to housing abundance

Supply scepticism is a concerning attitude emerging from NIMBYs and some policymakers. The core tenet of the argument is that additional housing supply, particularly private market supply, or private market supply that is not considered affordable, will not help, or will even worsen housing affordability issues.

Supply scepticism is a policy dead end and without evidentiary basis. All stakeholders know that the housing market is complex – influenced by an extensive array of economic, policy, taxation, cultural, social and political factors. Actions, choices and outcomes are not always the most rational nor most efficient.

There is extensive evidence, however, that supply is an essential and unavoidable remedy to the housing crisis. Reforms, tweaks and movements to other influencing factors will not rectify the fundamental demand and supply imbalance.

The demand and supply imbalance is evident through not only rental and price growth, but through long-lines at rental inspections, more share houses, social housing waiting lists, and increasing anxiety in households across WA.

Housing abundance

Supply at and in all price points, tenures, locations, and forms

- More places for people to live in.
- Greater choice for all consumers.
- The right house for the right household.
- A healthy, functioning market.
- Moderated, sustainable rental and price growth.
- Less displacement and greater housing security.
- More resilient and vibrant communities.

> *Forty years ago, the UK, US, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Ireland had roughly 400 homes per 1,000 residents, level with developed continental European countries. Since then the two groups have diverged, the Anglosphere standing still while Western Europe has pulled clear to 560 per 1,000. Unsurprisingly, the same pattern is reflected in house prices, which have risen further and faster in most Anglophone countries since the global financial crisis than elsewhere.*
>
> ***John-Burn Murdoch, Financial Times, March 2023 [7]***

> *As a rule of thumb, every 1 per cent increase in the number of dwellings (when driven by an increase in supply) lowers the [real] cost of housing by 2½ per cent.*
>
> ***Reserve Bank of Australia, March 2019 [8]***

> *When new housing is not built, higher-income households outbid middle- and lower-income families for the existing, older stock of dwellings.*
>
> ***Liu, McManus, and Yannopoulos, March 2022 [9]***

> *If supply is abundant, those at the bottom benefit most.*
>
> ***Centre for Independent Studies, February 2024 [10]***

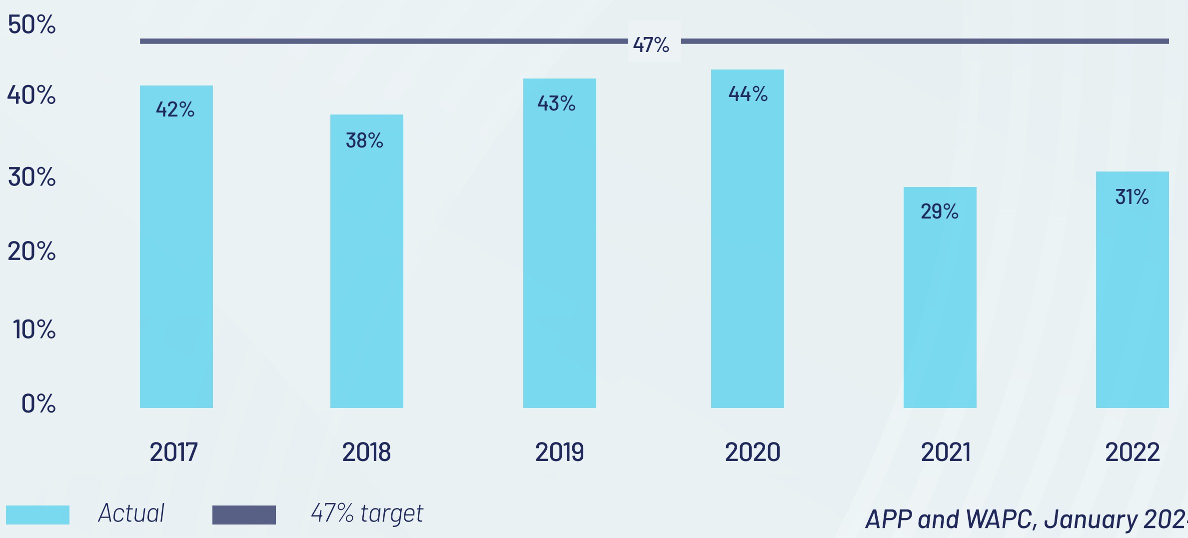
> *Western housing shortages do not just prevent many from ever affording their own home. They also drive inequality, climate change, low productivity growth, obesity, and even falling fertility rates.*
>
> ***Myers, Bowman, and Southwood, September 2021 [11]***

Perth is not meeting infill targets

Residential building approvals in WA dropped in 2022-23 to the lowest level in decades *(ABS, April 2024 [12])*, with WA and Australia running well behind National Housing Accord dwelling targets *(Master Builders Australia, April 2024 [13])*.

Perth is also continually missing its 47 per cent infill housing target set by Perth and Peel @3.5million. Data also shows that much of Perth's infill are single dwellings – a mix of battleaxe, duplex and triplex-style development. Continued years of these patterns have resulted in Perth having markedly lower proportions of dwellings that are flats/apartments, and very few that are significant in scale.

Urban infill rate (net dwellings) | *Greater Perth*



APP and WAPC, January 2024 [14]

Despite prominent examples, Perth's infill is mostly just single dwellings

67 per cent

Proportion of Perth's infill that is single dwellings (2022)

WAPC, January 2024 [15]

20 per cent

Proportion of Perth infill development with more than 50 dwellings on a lot (2018-2022)

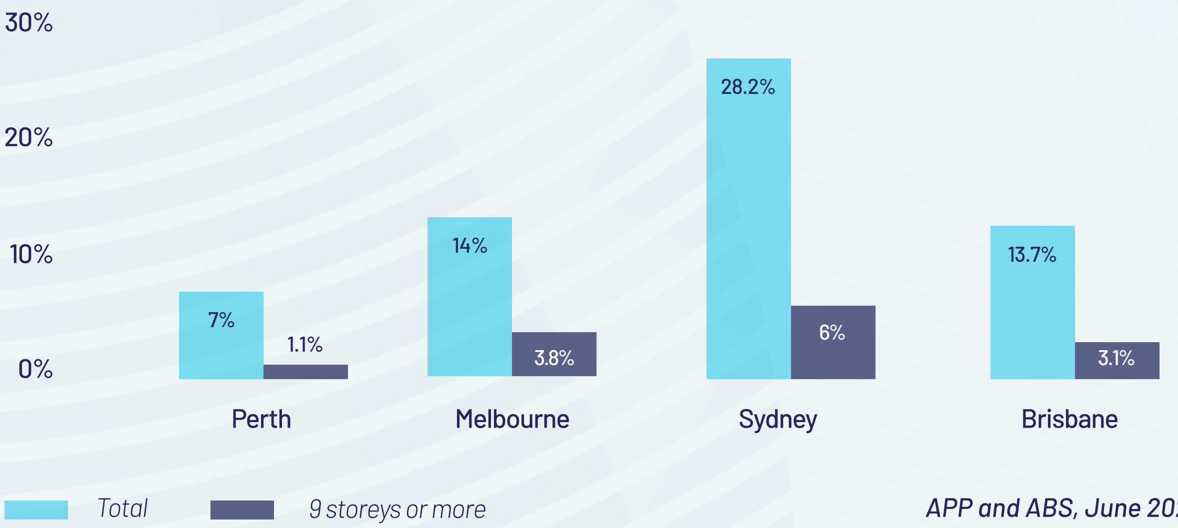
APP and WAPC, January 2024 [16]

11

Number of buildings in Perth with a residential component over 100 metres tall

APP, March 2024

Proportion of dwellings that are flats / apartments | *Greater capital cities*



APP and ABS, June 2022 [17]

Infill tales

Perception is not always reality when it comes to infill

While there is constant, iterative work to expand precincts where more intensive development is possible, and to reform the processes to enable and facilitate approvals – there is more work to do.

In a city where single houses are the cultural norm, and even the drawcard for some migrants, infill can face an uphill battle of perceptions. This is despite the vast majority of Perth residents being open to or supportive of medium-density development in their communities *(Property Council of Australia (WA), January 2019 [18])*.

In knowledge of the progress that needs to be made it is worthwhile to explore the misconceptions that may be holding infill back. Misconceptions, myths and exaggerations have the potential to hamper housing abundance on a project-by-project basis through a myriad of decisions, choices and processes.

This is important to consider because understanding community needs and barriers – the attitudes, inherent beliefs, mindsets and issues relevant to stakeholders – are essential to enabling the reframing and enablement of urban density.

Misconceptions about infill can be held by all stakeholders in the planning and development process – politicians, decision-makers, government officers, private consultants, other industry participants, and the general community. All stakeholders have influence at various phases and critical points in the development system.

Every time when an area's development capacity is reduced, when a project is made to be smaller, or when the enabling of a precinct or project is delayed - there is at least one less home for our growing city.

Infill concern categories

Increasing level of direct, personal impact

System scepticism
The planning and development process is unfair and/or poorly regulated.

Quality qualms
Infill development quality is poor and untrustworthy.

Demand doubts
No one wants to live in apartments and they are often empty.

Affordability anxiety
New housing won't be affordable anyway and could make things worse.

Somewhere else syndrome
Housing need can be accommodated somewhere else.

Climate confusion
Infill isn't sustainable and is bad for the environment.

Servicing suspicions
There is insufficient local transport and utility network capacity in existing suburbs.

Design distrust
Infill development is ugly and won't be a nice place to live.

People problems
Who exactly is moving into my neighbourhood?

Community impact concerns
The community I know and love will change, and traffic will get worse.

Direct impact dilemma
The value and enjoyment of my home will be compromised.

Infill tales: flipped

	Overview	Common sentiments	Key industry messages	The facts
System scepticism	• There is scepticism about the function of the planning and development system – and confusion as to whether its function is to act in response to localised concerns or broader strategic interests. • There is distrust as to the motives of developers and a belief that only they gain from increased development. • There is a perception that planning controls are fixed in time and outcomes.	• Planners/officials/elected members are not listening to the local community. • Local communities have a right to have the final say on the future of their suburb. • We were never told about these plans in the past and made decisions based on previous plans or promises. • Developers only care about profit, and don't care about the local community. • Planning controls cannot or should not be varied, and when they are – it is corrupt, inappropriate, or bad regardless of the outcome.	• The planning and development system is rigorous, extensively regulated, and full of professionals that are passionate about creating better places. • Like all businesses, developers need to make returns to sustain their operations and invest. Developers supply the vast majority of homes, and property is a critical part of our economy. • Planning and development systems need to consider the future of Perth and WA as a whole and accommodate housing and growth in a way that is efficient, fair and sustainable. • The planning system and associated frameworks are under constant review to respond to emerging issues and trends – cities must change and adapt over time.	• Planning decision makers, officers and related personnel are subject to extensive guidance, policies and laws in relation to conflicts, conduct and decision-making. Most professional bodies like the Planning Institute of Australia and the Australian Institute of Architects similarly have codes of professional conduct. • Discretion is a key principle of the Western Australian planning system – 'The existence of a policy cannot replace the discretion of the decision-maker in the sense that it is to be inflexibly applied regardless of the merits of the particular case *(Clive Elliot Jennings & Co Pty Ltd v WAPC 2002 [19])*. The WAPC has also published principles-based guidance with respect to discretion in decision making. • Planning law and manuals require constant review of planning instruments, including local planning schemes every five years, and structure plans are expected to have a validity period of typically 10 years. • The private sector has been delivering over 95 per cent of housing in Australia for decades *(The Australia Institute, December 2022 [20])*. • The property sector, which also designs and builds public and community housing, directly accounts for 12.8 per cent of Australia's GDP, contributes 18.1 per cent of Australian tax and local government rates, fees, and charges revenue, and directly employs 1.48 million full time equivalent workers *(AEC Group, July 2020 [21])*.
Quality qualms	• There are doubts as to whether new developments are sufficiently regulated for quality and durability. • There is confusion as to who is responsible when something goes wrong with building quality.	• New buildings are 'dodgy' and of poor quality. • New residents will be the ones to suffer from poor quality buildings. • Taxpayers will be left to cover the bill for any major issues. • High-profile examples of building issues are not isolated and have exposed the sector's practices.	• New buildings need to go through extensive review and certification processes with a range of specialist experts and government officials. • Substantial building faults are extremely rare, and all construction projects from time-to-time experience issues. It is in the interests of developers and industry to avoid issues to protect their reputation and mitigate risk. • Developers are liable for defects for a substantial period of time following building completions.	• *The Building Services (Complaint Resolution and Administration) Act 2011* allows for complaints to be made about building work within 6 years of completion. If builders do not directly address complaints satisfactorily, various processes exist to enforce requirements under that Act. • The WA Building Commission (part of DEMIRS) monitors complaints. Of the 699 complaints determined (and not referred to SAT) in 2022-23, 66 were dismissed or refused, with the rest mediated, withdrawn or orders for remediation were issued *(DEMIRS, August 2023 [22])*. • *The Building Act 2011* enforces the Building Code of Australia from the National Construction Code, with Certificates of Design Compliance and Certificates of Construction Compliance required prior to works commencing and prior to occupation, respectively. • The Australian Building Codes Board typically reviews the National Construction Code every 3 years, following extensive engagement and review processes. • The WA Government has committed to additional reforms and standards, which will, amongst other things, include additional inspections through the course of construction, improved enforcement powers, additional registration requirements for various parties involved in the building process, and third-party review of structural design for significant buildings *(Government of Western Australia, December 2023 [23])*.
Demand doubts	• There is scepticism as to whether people truly want to live in apartments. • There is a perception that apartment living is not compatible with Perth's climate and lifestyle. • There is a perception that apartments are vehicles for foreign investment that stay empty.	• People only live in apartments when they don't have any other choice. • Apartment living is incompatible with Perth's lifestyle. • People come to Perth for open space, not apartment living. • Infill is being forced by others and is not in response to demand. • Apartments primarily exist for foreign investors and often stay empty – new apartment supply doesn't fix anything. • Land is being wasted for types of housing that people don't want.	• An increasing number of people are choosing apartment living for the location and amenity benefits of urban living. • Every individual and household has the right to live in a way that best suits their needs, wants and circumstances – without affecting anybody else. • Despite a major apartment building boom over the last decade across Australia, rental vacancies are at all-time lows - meaning even more is required. • The proportion of foreign buyers is very low in WA, and across Australia foreign purchasers are taxed higher than local buyers which removes advantages over local buyers. • Every home enabled by foreign investment is another home for someone to live in.	• The proportion of dwellings in Greater Perth that are flats or apartments increased in the 5 years to 2021 from 6.6 per cent to 7.6 per cent *(ABS, June 2022 [17])*. • With very little to no vacant land in established suburbs, apartments and townhouses are the only way to increase net dwelling stock in those areas. • The proportion of 'vacant' dwellings has remained around 10 per cent for the last ~40 years in the Census, with this explained by residents being away, properties being renovated or transacted, or being used as a holiday home *(HIA, November 2023 [24])*. • The proportion of foreign investment in the WA real estate market was only around 1 per cent of total sales in 2022-23 *(REIWA, August 2023 [25])*. Across Australia the level of foreign property investment in 2022-23 was only equivalent to 11 per cent of its previous peak in 2015-2016 *(JLL, February 2024 [26])* – with investment heavily concentrated in Sydney and Melbourne. The Foreign Investment Review Board must assess any purchase, and generally only new stock can be purchased as an investment. • Foreign property investment 'may actually keep prices lower by increasing supply' *(House of Representatives Standing Committee on Economics, November 2014 [27])*.
Affordability anxiety	• There is a belief that apartments are only for the wealthy, or that only luxury apartments are being delivered. • Some believe that if housing is not very affordable it is not worth building, or simply will make the housing market worse.	• Developments that are not affordable will make the housing crisis worse. • Developments that are not affordable displace existing residents and communities. • Luxury apartments are the last thing that struggling families need.	• A healthy market provides housing for everyone, and housing across all price points ensures people don't seek housing above or below their desired price point. Everyone benefits with abundant housing. • Generally, apartments are relatively affordable compared to homes in equivalent suburbs – providing a greater range of price points in a suburb. • Limiting new housing supply in popular areas is what displaces existing communities.	• There is a ~$240,000 median cost differential between houses and units in Perth *(CoreLogic, February 2024 [28])*. • Increased supply on balance is linked to reductions in the real of cost of housing – in relation to rents and housing prices *(RBA, March 2019 [29])*. • "When gentrification occurs…without new developments, it will likely bring with it higher prices and more displacement than would have been the case if new developments had been allowed" *(Phillips, Manville and Lens, February 2021 [30])*. • Housing scarcity drives up prices and rents, and new housing construction, even for high-income households in the areas of highest amenity enable 'filtering' of housing to occur, improving affordability in other areas *(NSW Productivity Commission, May 2023 [31])*. • Inclusionary zoning (i.e., mandated provision of non-market housing), largely derives value from other restrictive planning practices. Liberalising all forms of housing construction is the more effective policy solution *(Hamilton, February 2021 [32])*.
Somewhere else syndrome	• Some consider that demand for housing can be accommodated elsewhere, or in very defined and limited parts of the city. • There is some confusion as to the way development occurs and the players and factors required to enable development to occur.	• We can meet demand for housing via new suburbs. • Infill housing should be located in the CBD or the town centre only. • Apartments are only appropriate on major roads and transport corridors. • You should put the development over there and develop that site instead.	• Constraining supply in areas of most demand directly contributes to housing unaffordability. • Diverse ranges of density, from townhouses to towers, can be appropriate in the right settings. Excluding anything other than single houses limits choice and diversity. • Access to waterfronts, parks, and quiet streets should not be the exclusive domain of house-dwellers – living on noisy, polluted roads can be detrimental to health and wellbeing. • No one person can dictate or control the specific areas that are developed and in what order – for development to occur there must be a variety of willing parties and circumstances.	• Of the expected 106,300 dwelling shortfall forecast in Australia over the next five years, 62,300 of that shortfall is from a lack of apartments and medium density dwellings. Perth's annual dwelling shortfall is expected to be around 5,000 per year to at least 2026 *(NHFIC/Housing Australia, April 2023 [33])*. Property Council modelling shows that the cumulative shortfall by 2027 could be almost 25,000 dwellings *(Property Council of Australia (WA), February 2024 [4])*. • Perth's land and infrastructure planning is based on 47 per cent of new dwellings being accommodated in established areas, with targets across all sub-regions of the city and various local governments. Land allocations and infrastructure development, planned many years in advance, do not accommodate for greenfield development to enable all of the city's planned growth. • Available greenfield lot stock was only equivalent to 1.1 months' worth of demand at the end of 2023 in Perth *(UDIA, March 2024 [34])*. • Concentrating new housing on major roads increases exposure to pollutants and noise that are harmful to health – with the effects accentuated without adequate mitigation measures *(Cowie and Marks, UNSW, July 2017 [35])*.

Infill tales: flipped

	Overview	Common sentiments	Key industry messages	The facts
Climate confusion	• Some question the inherent sustainability of apartment living and consider that suburban living is more environmentally friendly.	• New developments will remove trees and consume too much energy and resources. • Green suburbs are better for the environment. • We have to stop accommodating and enabling so much growth.	• Apartment and more compact living consumes fewer resources, is much more energy efficient, and is often associated with a more active lifestyle – when compared to suburban living. • More people living closer to where they live, work and enjoy life is the best way to encourage sustainable travel behaviour. • Wishing growth was not happening is a pathway to pain and extreme housing unaffordability that will compromise our prosperity and living standards.	• High-density living arrangements are associated with increased walking and active transport usage and better cardiovascular health *(Billie Giles-Cortin, Ryan, and Foster, March 2012 [36])*. • Infill housing is over $94,000 cheaper than greenfield housing on a per lot upfront infrastructure cost *(Property Council of Australia (WA) and Others, June 2016 [37])*. • In terms of energy used for transportation, denser central / inner urban housing is between four and five times less energy consuming than low density outer fringe suburbs *(Newman, CUSP, September 2014 [38])*. • The continually reviewed National Construction Code, which applies to all new buildings, has extensive standards relating to energy and water efficiency, so new developments are increasingly more efficient and of higher quality.
Servicing suspicions	• Some doubt that existing utility networks can cope with new developments. • Some consider that new developments is only appropriate where infrastructure is fully accommodated and realised.	• New developments will overload the water, power and/or sewer systems. • Infill development is only appropriate right next to train stations. • The infrastructure has to be fully in place before development can proceed. • Infill development will crowd out my shopping centre, childcare centre or main street.	• Government agencies are constantly reviewing utility system capacity and accommodating growth – major increases in population have been planned for across most suburbs for many decades – with major investments completed, underway, and planned. • Ongoing population growth drives market and government response to amenity and service provision – it is not feasible or efficient to open facilities too far in advance or when it is unviable to do so.	• Perth's population forecasts, continually reviewed, together with various planning documents feed into long-term forward infrastructure planning by key utilities. Providers respond to the planned direction of the city. • On an individual project basis, there is frequent collaboration between agencies and service providers, to affirm relevant capacity, or to facilitate upgrades. • As occurs in greenfield areas, services, retail and other amenities follow opportunity and population growth - it is therefore important that local centres can grow to service local communities.
Design distrust	• Some believe that new developments is often poorly designed or ugly. • There is a belief that new developments is functionally poor for residents. • Some consider that building height or visibility of buildings is inherently bad.	• New developments are overbearing and too visible. • Tall buildings ruin an area's character. • Developers can get away with anything and there are no standards or controls. • New developments are full of 'dog boxes' that people don't want to live in.	• All projects go through various forms of review, including often design review that aligns with principles set by the state government. • Projects need to balance various controls around construction codes, sustainability, fire, planning controls, and cost efficiency. These controls also regulate and manage minimum standards and outcomes. • Becoming a more urban city means that more development will be visible and closer together – this is not inherently bad. The alternative is additional clearing of virgin bushland and/or worsening affordability.	• There are a suite of policies and requirements that dictate internal living spaces and building spaces, over and above National Construction Code requirements. • Most projects also go through a process of design review by design professionals not directly associated with a project – considering broad principles set out by *State Planning Policy 7 – Design of the Built Environment*, which requires consideration of matters like sustainability, context and character, amenity, and aesthetics. • Simpler building forms resonate more with the cities that many people love and are more convenient for apartment dwellers. Complex setback controls and 'wedding cake' style design standards that seek to minimise building visibility add to operational and construction costs, lessen thermal efficiency and limit adaptability over time *(Eliason, August 2018 [39])*. • Low-rise apartment buildings are typically much more costly to develop as land represents a larger component of overall costs *(Jenner and Tulip, RBA, August 2020 [40])*.
People problems	• Some consider that new residents can alter existing community character for the worse. • Some are concerned that apartment dwellers are less connected to local communities or should be treated with suspicion.	• New developments will be full of renters that don't care about the local community. • New developments will turn into slums and will be poorly managed. • Apartment buildings are full of 'weirdos' and 'creeps'.	• Apartment dwellers represent everyone across the community, just like those who live in houses. • Most apartment buildings are professionally managed, with strata managers and building management subject to increased regulation.	• Significant strata reforms were introduced in 2020, which included clearer statutory duties for strata managers, and requirements for 10-year maintenance plans that set-out and budget for the maintenance, repair, renewal or replacement of all common property. • Most strata by-laws regulate matters like noise, use of common property, permanent or temporary impacts to the external appearance of buildings, and car parking. • Perth has tended to have a much greater share of owner-occupier apartment buyers relative to Australia *(CoreLogic, April 2024 [41])*, meaning more residents are invested in and likely to be long-term residents. • Approximately 30 per cent of Australian dwellings are rented *(ABS, June 2022 [42])* with the proportion slightly less in Perth (26.6 per cent) – meaning that many of the people that we know and care for and renters. The proportion is typically much higher in central areas.
Community impact concerns	• Some consider that new developments will change the character of a neighbourhood for the worse – particularly in relation to community facilities, traffic, and peaceful enjoyment.	• There is no sense of community in apartment buildings and people don't interact with each other. • More intense development attracts crime, litter and anti-social behaviour. • The local community has nothing to gain from new developments.	• Apartment dwellers go to work and school, participate in local organisations and clubs, and use the local shops and services just like everyone else. • More people can help sustain local businesses and clubs, and more rates can help maintain access to various government services and facilities. • The property industry is a significant and essential part of our community – providing good jobs across regulation, policy, planning, design, development, construction, management, and maintenance.	• Per capita retail spend in WA of $16,489 *(Colliers, November 2023 [43])* means that more people in local communities can support local businesses. • Density drives local vitality and creativity. Many of the cities that Western Australians love to visit, explore and enjoy are drastically denser than Perth. This includes Vancouver (~2.6x), Milan (3.6x), Paris (7.4x), and Barcelona (13.6x). Moderate increases in density in Perth will not radically alter the urban fabric, and it is likely that for many decades, Perth will remain one of the lowest density cities in the world *(Loader, March 2016 [44])*. • In contrast, large-distances and hostile environments in suburban areas can partly explain the giant drop in active transport (walking, cycling) being used to travel to school, which has dropped from 75 per cent to as low as 20 per cent in Perth over the last 40 years *(Department of Transport, 2021 [45])*.
Direct impact dilemma	• Some believe that new developments can have a direct, negative impact on property values. • Some also believe that personal safety and everyday enjoyment of their homes can be compromised.	• Increased development will lower the value of my home and compromise my financial future. • The peace and enjoyment of my home will be at risk. • We just want to enjoy our home in peace and not be disturbed by others.	• Single houses nearly always carry a premium to other forms of housing. Apartments typically act as a price floor in a suburb and track lower but are related to house prices. • Additional development can increase the scarcity of single homes and support additional amenities that can improve the appeal and lifestyle of an area.	• Other cities in Australia that have had greater growth in the supply of apartments have also had greater growth in house prices compared to Perth. • Over the last four years, as Perth has continued to build more apartments, the median price gap between units and houses in Perth has grown from 32.7 per cent to 49.1 per cent *(CoreLogic, February 2024 [28])*.

Industry is calling for action

Collective efforts are required to change attitudes

An open, web-based survey was conducted to gauge stakeholder attitudes and perceptions in relation to infill development and related barriers. The industry has already made clear that housing affordability and supply is the most critical area requiring attention by state governments and the federal government, with that issue consistently outranking other policy matters *(Procore and Property Council of Australia, March 2024 [46])*.

73 per cent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed that misconceptions, myths and exaggerations about the impacts of infill are negatively impacting supply, including every respondent between 18 and 29 years of age.

Respondents selected the following outcomes as the most prevalent as a result of infill misconceptions, myths and exaggerations:

- Lengthier approval processes.
- Development potential not reached.
- Less housing supply.

84 per cent of respondents said we should be doing more infill development.

Respondents selected the following as priority responses:

- Increased awareness of successful infill projects and outcomes.
- Better strategic planning.
- Better built-form quality and design.

All categories of infill concerns were said to be causing issues, particularly:

- Community impact concerns.
- System scepticism.
- Personal impact problems.
- Design distrust.

Organised and general community members were seen as the key drivers or influenced parties of/by misconceptions, myths and exaggerations, with elected members and media also scoring high. The state government was seen in the best light as being the least influenced.

Addressing perceptions around community impact concerns (17 per cent) was nominated as the primary area to focus advocacy efforts followed by system scepticism and design distrust.

The survey had 81 respondents, with a good cross-section of ages, including 18.5 per cent being 18-29 years old. Respondents were primarily made up of consultants, design and service providers to industry (over 42 per cent), however elected officials, state and local government officials, developers, those in the construction industry, and general members of the community were also represented. Over 85 per cent of respondents often or sometimes deal with government stakeholders and the community as part of their work in the property industry.

Additional comments on the frequent misconceptions, myths and exaggerations affecting infill

Appearances

Apartment development will destroy the established character of the inner suburbs.

Local impacts

The general concern that a development will not have enough parking, or will cause traffic chaos.

Community permission

Lack of understanding of planning holistically. As a result battles are fought on a DA by DA basis.

Other

Composition of foreign buyers - view that the WA apartment market is dominated by Chinese buyers.

Additional stakeholder insights and observations

System commentary

The residential planning system has become absurdly detailed for [the deemed to comply] process, and as soon as designers step away from deemed to comply, the timeframe for approvals is absurd. Local government imagine 60-90 day turn around is reasonable. It's not. Take all multi-residential and group housing planning approvals out of the hands of local governments and direct to state-based planning skill base to sort [it] out.

There is an issue with infill myths that makes it more difficult to get planning approvals. But I think 98 per cent of the time DAPs will come to the right decision and the process is relatively timely compared with some other states.

Zoning should apply minimum density and diversity. Apartments have to be mandated.

Many local government strategic infill plans do not involve input from relevant parties in the development industry to guide positive development outcomes in the appropriate locations. These strategic plans fail to take into account the impact on infrastructure and place too much onus on developers to resolve issues for the community that should be addressed by councils.

Industry sentiment and impact

It is important to consider the stress and anxiety that people experience. Applicants, the project teams, the decision-makers, the assessment officers, and the members of the community all experience different levels of anxiety, stress, uncertainty, concern, anger and despair (depending on the projects). This has a bearing on the resilience of all involved to keep pursuing good outcomes.

The industry we rely to put roofs over heads is treated with extreme suspicion. This speaks to the collective failure of industry and governments to explain how the planning system is designed to work and how it actually works.

Changing the conversation

We should stop using the dirty "D" word - density. Please never use it again. Please talk about housing diversity, access to services, affordability, aging in place, city sustainability, travel time and congestion, transport costs, etc. Density isn't an objective – it is a means to achieve better outcomes for residents.

Need for community to understand that not all density is intensive i.e. can include medium-density townhouses not just apartments.

Other priorities

Many of the "myths" listed seemed to be quite accurate concerns.

Key issue is development viability and the cost of construction - not myths.

Looking forward

More community engagement and education about the numerous public positive impacts infill development has.

Some quotes have had minor editing for grammar, spelling, clarity, brevity, and/or to ensure anonymity.

We're all in this together

Key industry stakeholders highlight the challenges in delivery infill

A series of interviews were conducted with stakeholders deeply familiar with the state of planning and development in Perth, including architects, state and local government officials, planners, developers, community engagement specialists, and an elected member.

Stakeholders painted a worrying picture. If perceptions of infill remained negative, Perth would continue to struggle to build the housing it needs. The need for a new, more mature narrative surrounding infill development was strongly conveyed.

Notable issues raised

A tale of two cities

Some stakeholders noted that various factors have resulted in Perth operating at two extremes – efficient at delivering greenfield expansion at scale and significant apartment towers. This leads to some thinking this is the only binary built-form choice.

Downscaled on arrival

Some stakeholders expressed concerns about plans and projects being paired back/downscaled in advance and in fear of community and/or stakeholder reaction. So, while projects often get approved, opportunities are missed and not tested.

Foreign dollars

Some stakeholders made clear that foreign capital had previously played a critical role in pre-sales and getting projects commenced. Foreign Buyers Duty scared investors away and hurt supply.

Design, review?

Stakeholders had mixed views on the function and success of design review panels. Some were seen to be efficient and pragmatic, whilst others were seen to be overly critical, dismissive of project viability, or relied too heavily upon for endorsement by some councils and decision makers.

Don't go down the rabbit hole

Some stakeholders highlighted the need to design and consider projects with context and community in mind. It was also cautioned, however, that proponents should avoid chasing shifting goalposts from detractors. Similarly, proponents should advocate and be confident in the benefits of their projects.

Touching new reality

Stakeholders noted that many community members have ingrained views on higher density development as a result of historical poor examples (locally and afar) – but that tactile experience and visibility of better projects helps and is helping.

Policy new balance

Some stakeholders were of the view that despite apartment living representing a small proportion of new housing in WA, it is subject to significantly greater levels of control and scrutiny – with the unintended effect of advantaging greenfield development. Increased infill planning resources were also sought.

Mixed crisis reactions

Stakeholders expressed mixed views and concern about the need to respond to the housing crisis filtering through all levels of government and agencies. This needs cultural leadership and is difficult to codify, with some agencies seen to be operating with a narrow focus and without urgency with respect to housing.

Future views

Stakeholders expressed that all decision makers need to consider community input in the context of strategic interests, and those without the time or knowledge of relevant processes. It was seen as incumbent on decision makers to take a broad view, and for exploration of processes and/or methods to measure true community sentiment.

Community education

Almost all stakeholders noted that there appeared to be low levels of understanding across the community of key urban issues. Too many projects are needing to provide strategic context and justification for what are city and statewide issues.

Benefit delayed

Some stakeholders observed the sometimes significant time delay between infill housing and observable improvements in community infrastructure. Whilst redevelopment/renewal areas often front-loaded local investment, most areas generally had little foresight or certainty in relation to local improvements.

Meet the market

Some stakeholders emphasised the need for proponents to continue to explore residential product that resonates with the WA market. Emphasis on outdoor and family living, alongside generous storage is seen as essential to shifting consumer attitudes and demand.

Key overall stakeholder messages

Infill misconceptions, myths and exaggerations are one of the many factors affecting housing and infill supply – impacting project certainty, development opportunities and occasionally timeframes. Other impeding factors, particularly in relation to feasibility and costs are industry's current primary concern.

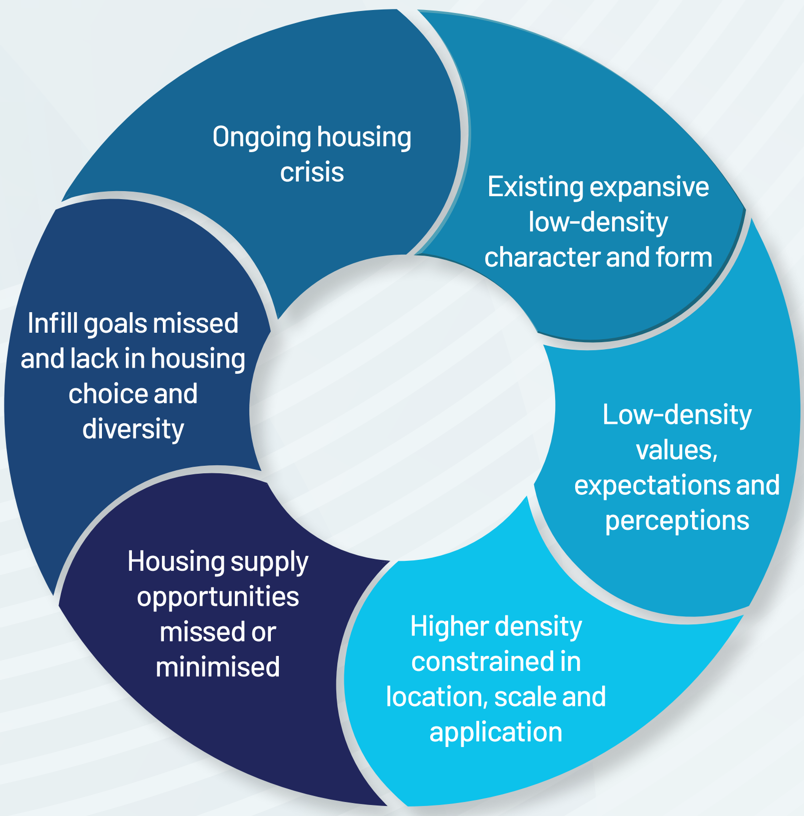
Increasing infill is leading to inevitable increased visibility of density, and an apparent clash between different visions for Perth. It is important to constantly improve project quality and design outcomes, and equally important to recognise where there may be a fundamental divergence of opinions of the best path forward for particular communities and/or subjective differences in what constitutes good design and planning.

The apparent lack of a common vision for Perth's growth is compromising the ability for individual projects to form part of a bigger story. The connection between increased housing in existing communities and improved housing supply and affordability is not broadly accepted and/or understood.

WA's planning processes, systems, and tools on balance have improved markedly – and are generally considered to be performing well operationally in contrast to other systems across Australia. However, the availability of medium and high-density development sites in optimal locations across the city remains limited.

A self-perpetuating cycle

As Perth explores ways to respond to the housing crisis, it is important to approach the challenge in the knowledge of the scale of new housing required – to accommodate, sustain, and attract growth. This requires shifts in the thinking behind the way in which the city has historically and needs to develop.



Perth in perspective

Mixed results in the pathway to housing abundance

Before concrete is poured or keys are turned in doors there can occasionally be a long, winding, and sometimes treacherous path that must be traversed.

The following projects provide a spread of the varied experiences in project delivery in Perth. It is important to note that whilst larger, patient developers can at-times play the long game, many cannot afford this luxury.

The state government has implemented significant reforms to improve the processes to facilitate major projects. It appears that often the underlying planning framework direction and settings are not conducive to step changes in development patterns, despite the underlying process itself often being efficient.

Civic Heart - Finbar

- Landmark, precedent-setting apartment development in South Perth.
- The project is close to completion.
- Original proposal was for a single 37-storey tower with 294 units.
- The final project incorporates two towers of 39 and 22 storeys, with 309 units.

- Civic Heart site was acquired by the developer from the City, which expanded the site via a subsequent adjacent purchase.
- An initial proposal was approved in May 2015, despite an objection from Main Roads.
- The initial approval was complicated due to a Supreme Court decision relating to a nearby development that effectively undermined the manner in which the City had also interpreted and applied the planning scheme to Civic Heart.
- This decision inhibited the ability to amend the approval, necessary during usual development practice with large-scale mixed use projects, contributing to its lapsing in 2017 – with buyer deposits returned.
- Following site-specific planning changes (in advance of broader precinct changes), a new DA was lodged in late 2018.
- Despite extensive stakeholder engagement, design review panel support, and the City of South Perth recommending approval, the JDAP initially deferred its decision in order to get advice from the Government Architect, and then refused the application in October 2019. The developer lodged an appeal with SAT.
- In early 2020, following intervention by Minister for Planning, pursuant to section 246(2)(a) of the Planning and Development Act,, Civic Heart was approved.
- The development was opposed by various community groups, including 'Save the South Perth Peninsula' which said the project was a 'gross overdevelopment' (WAToday, February 2020 [47]).
- **The Civic Heart project demonstrates the significant impact of a lack of planning certainty and community opposition, even with a supportive local government.projects.**

331 West Coast - Westbridge Urban

- Coastal development on the 'Yelo' café site in Trigg.
- Project completion is planned for early 2025.
- Original proposal was for 7 units over 4 storeys with a café.
- The final project incorporates 6 units over 4 storeys, with an office.

- The project was considered by JDAP in 2020 and early 2021 and was repeatedly refused (in line with recommendations by the City of Stirling), including on the grounds that it lacked appropriate visitor parking for the originally incorporated café. This was despite SAT recommending reconsideration.
- Following design adjustments, including a reduction by one apartment and replacement of the café with an office tenancy, the project was approved in August 2021, with the City of Stirling 'bitterly disappointed' with the decision *(City of Stirling, August 2021 [48])*.
- Proposals often received close to 100 objections, and community members/groups engaged specialist firms to assist with supporting objecting evidence.
- Community group Too Big for Trigg sought to overturn the approval in the Supreme Court in early 2022, however abandoned action in June 2022.
- **Yelo is an example of the challenges in bringing density to Perth's coast, and the consequences of applying suburban parking standards to more urban development – with the community losing a popular café due to these standards.**

387 Fitzgerald - Celsius Property Group

- A proposed major development in the North Perth town centre.
- The project has yet to commence, with intended completion in 2027.
- The original proposal was for 97 units over two towers of 13 and 11 storeys.
- The approved project includes 104 units over 9 storeys.

- The project was initially lodged in August 2022, and was refused by JDAP in December 2022, which cited excessive height, bulk, plot ratio incompatible with local character, and a lack of visitor parking. The City of Vincent recommended refusal, and the then-mayor also made a deputation against the development.
- A SAT review was sought by the applicant in February 2023, but was later withdrawn, with the applicant commenting "we are not about wasting resources and money fighting at SAT" *(Business News, August 2023 [49])*. This was because the developer considered a fresh, revised application, was the best way to find a path forward.
- After a reduction in height, and a substantial reduction in the scale of commercial floorspace, the proposal received JDAP approval in November 2023. This followed four rounds of design review following submittal in June 2023.
- Of the 366 submissions received on the revised proposal, a slight majority supported the project – a substantial change from the 64 per cent that objected to the initial proposal - noting the total number of submissions was considered low as a proportion of the whole affected community.
- Whilst City officers supported the revised proposal, the Mayor deputised against the development, saying it should be refused due to the impact on the local community.
- **387 Fitzgerald demonstrates that even in high amenity areas close to the CBD, moderate-sized projects encounter extensive difficulties, delays and opposition.**

Claremont on the Park - DevelopmentWA and others

- Claremont on the Park is one of Perth's better infill success stories – accommodating development around an oval with revitalised sporting, cultural and public space amenities.
- Construction is complete on 6 of the 7 major development sites around the oval.
- When first floated as early as 2006, it was expected 430 new dwellings could be accommodated in the precinct, however the latest estimate is that the final total will exceed 850 units.

- Whilst the precinct is considered a broad success - with most residents moving from surrounding areas and DevelopmentWA and some developers in receipt of multiple awards. However, some individual projects have had a bumpy ride.
- One recent project that was similar in scale to many of the completed developments was initially refused by JDAP despite support via design review and key stakeholders.
- This project was later approved at SAT following an appeal process.
- The local government raised concerns about the height of the project despite the proposal being only marginally higher than a neighbouring completed building.
- **Claremont on the Park can serve as a positive example of urban infill in Perth that can assist with improving community perceptions about the impact, livability, and amenity of higher density development.**

West Village - Blackburne

- West Village is a proposed residential development adjacent to Karrinyup Shopping Centre.
- Pre-sales are underway, and work is expected to commence this year.
- The original project was for 270 units over three towers of 9, 15 and 25 storeys.
- The final project incorporates 253 units over two towers of 14 and 23 storeys.

- The first application for the project was lodged in July 2020, with the JDAP deferring a decision in May 2021 to request further information regarding traffic movement, community benefit and access. The City of Stirling recommended refusal citing height and traffic as concerns.
- An amended application with various design refinements and modifications, was submitted in July 2021, which was subsequently approved in September 2021. Again, the City recommended refusal claiming that prior issues had not been properly addressed. This followed Blackburne taking over the project from the shopping centre owner.
- Another amendment was submitted in April 2022 and approved in August 2022, being the latest iteration of the development.
- The City again recommended refusal citing similar concerns regarding excessive height bulk and scale. Following the August decision the Mayor stated that the JDAP was "out of touch... with local context and the community" *(Business News, August 2022 [50])*.
- Issued raised during the various consultation process revealed perceived overdevelopment and traffic congestion being key concerns.
- The City of Stirling supported the 7 storey, 94 unit development East Village in 2018, which is now complete.
- **Developments around Karrinyup demonstrate the pent-up demand for high quality new housing in established middle ring suburbs, and the conflicts that can arise as activity centres develop as planned in strategic planning policy.**

> *"It's a really sought-after area, we think it's a right area for density. We've been overwhelmed with people inquiring into this place."*
>
> *Blackburne following approval, 2022*

(Business News, August 2022 [50])

Canning Bridge Precinct - City of Melville, City of South Perth, and others

- A wave of development has progressed across Applecross, Mount Pleasant , and to a lesser degree Como and South Perth following the Canning Bridge Activity Centre Plan being adopted in 2016 and an initial vision set out in 2011.
- Up to 10,000 additional dwellings are planned for to 2051, with well over 1,000 new apartments already built, underway, or approved.
- Major projects have been progressed or proposed by Finbar, Erben, Norup + Wilson, and Edge Visionary Living.

- The wave of development proposals revealed significant appetite and demand for new housing in the area, but exposed unresolved transition issues.
- This has resulted in various legal challenges, reviews to planning frameworks, and community opposition. This included new building height restrictions passed in 2019 and an ongoing extensive review of the activity centre plan by the City of Melville. Community concerns include excessive height and traffic, and lack of affordable housing.
- Issues with transport have also been revealed, with major transit upgrades required and increasing conflict between Canning Highway's arterial road function and an emerging urban community, resulting in a proposed road trench that has been objected to by the City of Melville, urban planners, and community members.
- Various projects have encountered issues along the journey. Some projects have encountered extensive delays and have required substantive design revisions due to concerns around built form transition and 'community benefit.
- **An exciting new skyline is emerging in Applecross and surrounds, revealing significant demand for more intense housing across Perth. Despite extensive challenges, the patience of developers has resulted in thousands of new homes being unlocked.**

Please note that inclusion and reference of the relevant parties for various case studies does not imply endorsement of otherwise of any of the commentary and/or recommendations within this report.

YIMBYism in action

Many cities are pursuing significant housing reform due to community pressure for action

Across the world, and increasingly in Australia, YIMBYs and other urban activists are winning the battle of ideas. What were fringe and radical beliefs only a decade ago are in the process of entering the mainstream as cities reconsider long-held controls and practices.

Global housing reform

British Columbia, Canada	British Columbia saw significant housing reform in 2023 including permitting apartment buildings of up to 20 storeys within 200 metres of rail stations, limiting or removing parking requirements, and eliminating all public hearings for plan-compliant buildings. Investigations are also underway to permit some buildings to have a single emergency stairwell. Abundant Housing Vancouver, a local group organised in 2016 has rallied in support for rezoning and housing reform at various public hearings.
Melbourne, Australia	YIMBY Melbourne was incorporated in 2023, and has been advocating for new housing projects, reform, and training interested persons in how to advocate for abundant housing their communities. YIMBY Melbourne has been particularly vocal about 'wedding cake' design standards that limit viable development, and broadscale 'character' and 'heritage' controls that they argue have been weaponised to limit development in many inner and middle ring communities. The group is currently seeking major changes to the City of Melbourne Heritage Strategy, with 56 per cent of developable land in the municipality currently affected by character/heritage restrictions.
Montana, USA	Montana's vast 2023 housing reforms, referred to as the Montana Miracle, included legalisation of secondary dwellings state-wide, limiting design reviews for smaller developments, requiring population growth targets to be set and accommodated in local plans, and limiting the ability for setback, density and parking controls to restrict development capacity.
Queensland, Australia	YIMBY QLD was incorporated in 2017 and has been organising, making submissions and leading city dialogue. YIMBY QLD created a positive submissions toolkit and was successful in changing controls in Brisbane that limited use of apartment building rooftops.
Sydney, Australia	Amongst other initiatives, the NSW Government is implementing the Transit Oriented Development State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP).This will see the effective upzoning of land within a 400 metres radius of 31 metro and rail stations, and 1,200 metres of another eight stations, allowing for 138,000 additional dwellings. These changes will permit the construction of up to six-storey apartment buildings in all residential zoned land within the radius. This includes possible application to character/heritage areas, and various community and political objections have been made. NSW Planning Minister has stated that 'cities aren't museums'. Sydney YIMBY has been lodging formal submissions, making representations at public hearings, and training housing advocates.
United Kingdom	The UK is well advanced in its housing crisis, caused and accentuated by decades of limited housing construction. In response and in the lead up to a national election in 2024 or 2025, the Labour opposition has promised to 'blitz' the planning system – promising to fast-track brownfield developments, enabling new towns to be developed, and to force local planning updates. Calls for action cross the political spectrum, with prominent conservative commentator Tom Harwood continually calling out anti-housing policies and decisions and calling for the UK to 'act like a developing country' with respect to housing.
Wellington, New Zealand	Taking cues from Auckland, Wellington has recently adopted its new District Plan. YIMBY advocates were successful in drastically reducing the extent of 'inner city character areas' and large-scale broadening of permissibility for six-storey apartment buildings. This followed intense criticism on recommendations from an independent panel that, amongst other things, voiced scepticism that planning changes could result in increased supply or affordability.

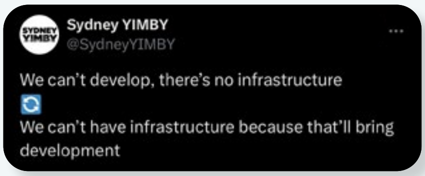
YIMBY is global

Across the globe, YIMBYs are organising and gathering strength. YIMBYs have presence in countless cities, including 75 cities in the United States alone.

> *Until recently, supply-side reform was an obsession for a passionate few, but largely absent from broader political discourse. In recent times, the political clout of renters has grown and the YIMBY movement has gained momentum.*
>
> ***Brendan Coates and Joey Moloney, Grattan Institute, March 2024.***

(Coats and Moloney, Grattan Institute, March 2024 [51])

YIMBY sentiment is resetting housing dialogue



@SydneyYIMBY, X, July 2023

SMH, September 2023

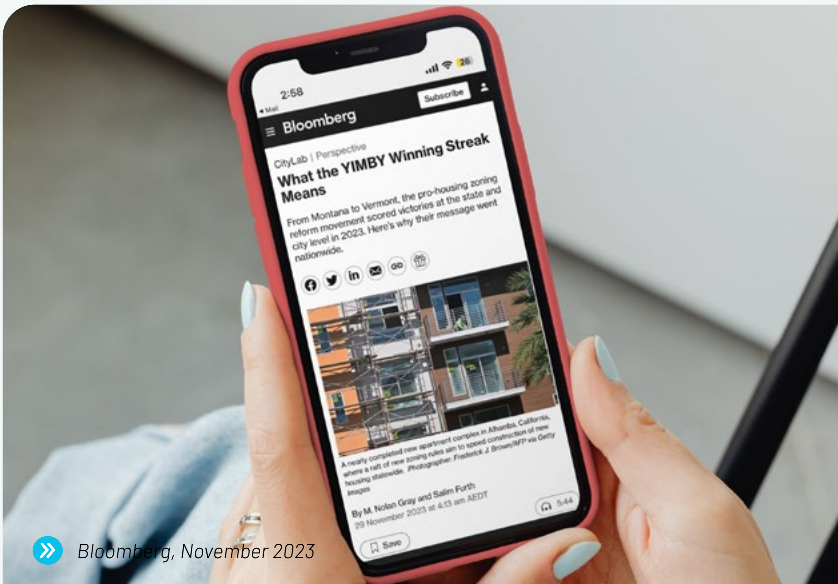
The Times, April 2024

@yimbymelbourne, X February 2024

@signedbritt, Tik Tok August 2023

The New York Times March 2024

AFR, May 2023



Bloomberg, November 2023

YIMBYism: it works

Some cities are more advanced in their journey toward housing abundance, with increasing evidence that a lot more housing is always on balance better for residents and economic prosperity.

Austin: more homes, far from home

The City

- Austin, Texas has a population approaching 2.5 million people, having been the fastest growing large metropolitan area for 12 years until recently in the United States *(City of Austin, March 2024 [52])*.
- In the 10 years between 2010 and 2020, Austin's population grew by 33 per cent and its GDP nearly doubled *(McKinsey & Company, April 2023 [53])*.
- The city's population boom has been driven by significant growth in the tech sector, attracting businesses and residents from other legacy cities.
- Kirk Watson, the current Mayor of Austin previously described the city's planning and development systems as "wildly inefficient", mirroring claims of local YIMBYs *(Austin Monitor, August 2023 [54])*.

YIMBYism in Action

- With rapid population growth came rapid housing cost growth that stretched the capacity of existing systems to respond.
- Starting in the early 2020's the Austin City Council started to make significant reforms to the city's planning and development systems. These reform efforts are ongoing as of 2024.
- At the heart of recent reforms is the effective upzoning of all low-density single dwelling only zoned land, which was achieved by a reduction in minimum lot sizes, and various changes to parking requirements. Many other far-reaching reforms have been stymied by legal challenges and local opposition.
- The City Council is also exploring relaxation of 'Compatibility Rules', which limit apartment development near low density housing.
- Despite what has seemed like haphazard and often delayed plans for major reform, Austin on balance has more sites where significant-scale development is possible – especially compared to traditional tech cities on the Pacific Coast.

Outcomes

- In the decade between 2012 and 2022, annual residential building approvals more than doubled *(Federal Reserve St. Louis, February 2024 [55])*.
- An apartment building boom has meant that Austin has built homes at a faster and higher proportion than any other city in the USA – at 18.3 total residential units approved in 2022 per 1,000 residents – almost eight times the rate of San Francisco *(Apartment List, March 2023 [56])*.
- With 17,025 units completed in 2023, and another 42,986 under construction at the beginning of 2024, rental prices are moderating and even reversing some previous gains. Other cities with the lowest or negative rental price growth like Jacksonville and Phoenix similarly had very high rates of apartment completions *(Basham, January 2024 [57])*.

Lessons Learned

- While Austin's housing costs have significantly increased over the previous decade and beyond, the impact of a significant supply response is now starting to filter through via moderating rents – noting market conditions may have been accentuated by other economic factors including a recent slowdown in the tech sector.
- It is likely that Austin's capacity to grow has been an essential ingredient in its economic success story and paints a clear contrast to other cities with anaemic supply growth.

Demand is a gazelle and supply is an elephant. Decisions made years ago are only now coming to fruition with apartment buildings opening up.

Jake Wegman, UT Austin, February 2024 [58]

As the joke goes, the official bird of Austin is the crane. The construction crane.

Audrey McGlinchy, KUT 90.5, February 2024 [58]

Auckland: more homes, closer to home

> *"I have seen very few economic phenomena like it - the new plan came into place and just absolutely skyrocketed these dwelling consents."*
>
> ***Matthew Maltman, Research Economist, September 2023 [59]***

The City

- Auckland is largest city in New Zealand, with an estimated metropolitan population of 1.7m (as at 2024).
- In the decade between 2011 and 2021, the median house price in New Zealand rose by roughly 130 per cent, a trend that was largely reflected in Auckland.
- Over this decade new housing supply was limited by outdated low-density zoning which covered a large portion of Auckland and other major cities.

YIMBYism in Action

- In 2010, the seven pre-existing city and district councils of the Auckland region were merged into a single local government entity, the Auckland Council, one of the largest local government bodies in the Oceania region.
- In 2016, against a backdrop of stalling supply the Auckland Council passed the Auckland Unitary Plan (AUP), a policy which saw roughly 75 per cent of residential land in the city upzoned *(AFR, May 2023 [60]).*

Outcomes

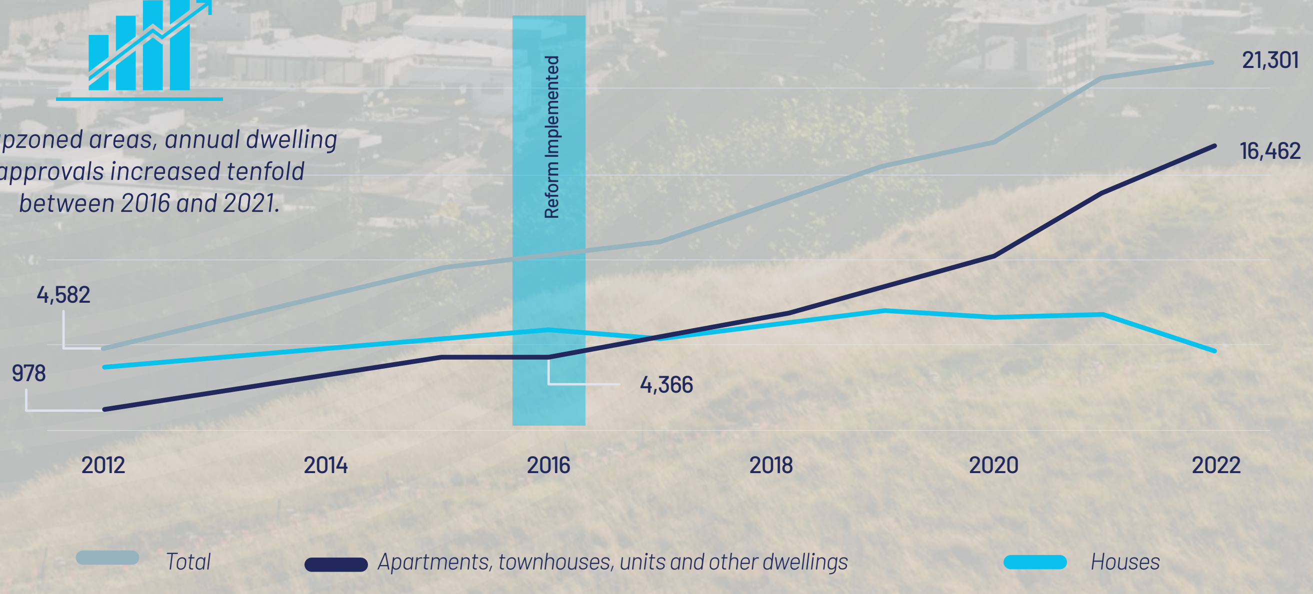
- After the AUP was passed the overall rate of annual housing permits issued more than doubled from just over 10,000 in 2016, to over 21,000 in 2022 *(Greenaway-McGrevy and Phillips, Economic Policy Centre, May 2023 [61]).*
- In upzoned areas, the per year increase in permits between 2016 and 2021 was more than tenfold *(Greenaway-McGrevy and Phillips, Economic Policy Centre, May 2023 [61]).*
- Since 2017 rents in Auckland have grown by roughly 1-2 per cent in real terms, whilst over the same period rents in Wellington have grown by about 20 per cent.

Lessons Learned

- Broadscale planning reform can lead to material improvements in housing supply and meaningful changes to housing affordability.

Annual residential building permits issued 2012 - 2022 in Auckland

In upzoned areas, annual dwelling approvals increased tenfold between 2016 and 2021.



YIMBY, Perth?

What could a housing abundance approach look like in our city

Whilst other cities are pursuing waves of reform and novel interventions, Perth can take some inspiration within its local context.

Western Australia is already well-ahead and/or settled on many fronts where other jurisdictions are playing catch up. This includes extensive de-politicised planning decision-making (via Development Assessment Panels and the WA Planning Commission), state approval pathways (via the-now Significant Development Pathway), finance support (via Keystart and its expanding product range), and newer initiatives for enabling infrastructure support (via the Infrastructure Development Fund and more).

Continuing this record of leadership is important to ensure Perth maintains its affordability advantage to attract and retain existing residents, migrants, and students.

1. A clearer vision for Perth

Issue: Apart from continued growth, there appears to be little common understanding as to the overarching vision for Perth's future and growth – the city that we are trying to be. This is complicating processes and efforts at the individual project and precinct level – requiring broader strategic justification and demonstration of community benefit. Perth's spatial layout and infill target is clear, but the manifestation of these goals is unclear to many at the local level.

There are many advocates across the state government, local government, industry, academia, and community for transition and change. Binding and common themes, language, examples and messages to aid stakeholder understanding and acceptance require exploration.

Recommendation 1.1: Prepare and issue a simple, graphic and high-level 'Plan for Perth' in various digital and physical mediums that captures the planned growth and transformation of the city, and the underlying principles and intended benefits of this transformation. This should identify amongst other things, intended greenfield and infill target areas, key focus areas for intensification, desired urban forms, housing types, and the scale of new amenities required to support growth (from retail floorspace to childcare centres and water supply). Much of this information is available across various plans and frameworks, but is not yet compiled in a concise manner that can be efficiently digested from a broad range of stakeholders.

Recommendation 1.2: Upon release of the above 'Plan for Perth', undertake a community information campaign on the scale of growth currently underway, and the scale of growth which will be required in the future, and outline the impacts on liveability if the city did not accommodate its required housing and amenities. This will assist in improving levels of community permission and stakeholder bravery to enable the city to grow at the pace required, and in the most efficient and desirable manner.

2. Housing abundance, codified

Issue: Big and small decisions are being made in policy settings, planning decisions and systems that affect housing supply and viability. Whilst often well-meaning and responding to project or site-specific issues, in totality they can affect overall housing supply and individual project feasibility. There is a lack of specific consideration of impacts on housing supply as a core goal of policy setting, management, and decision making.

Every project or precinct scaled down, not started, delayed, or not conceived results in less housing supply. Broader supply and affordability goals should have sufficient prominence and weighting in all decision making and policy setting.

Recommendation 2.1: Ensure that the newly established Housing Supply Unit in the Department of Treasury monitors and reviews policies, actions, responsiveness and decisions across all portfolios that may or have had potential to impact timely and efficient housing supply. Additional costs, timeframes, requirements, and processes should be avoided on a first-principles basis.

Recommendation 2.2: Ensure that impacts on timely and efficient housing supply is inserted as a consideration for development application decision-making in the deemed provisions for local planning schemes, and other relevant decision-making criteria lists.

3. Broadscale opportunity reviews

Issue: Much of Perth's inner city and middle suburbs are dominated by ultra-low densities that only allow for single housing or low-scale grouped housing. New suburbs are being developed at greater densities than existing suburbs, which generally have better proximity to jobs, services, and transport.

In addition, character and heritage controls limit development across larger parts of inner and middle ring suburbs and/or apply standards and expectations that limit the viability and/or efficient delivery of many forms of housing. There is prevailing sentiment in many of these areas that the overall scale and built form profile is relatively set, with only minor and incremental growth expected.

The built form across many rail precincts in the city remains subdued, with little evidence of transition in response to substantial government investment.

Recommendation 3.1: Expand the Metronet Station Precincts process and philosophy to existing rail stations and key transport nodes across the metropolitan area. This would involve centralised coordinated comprehensive audits of development capacity and the preparation of new planning frameworks. This should involve consideration of required improvements to local infrastructure and amenities, as well as requirements for improved access to relevant transport infrastructure.

Recommendation 3.2: Undertake a comprehensive identification and review of the impact of broadscale low-level heritage and character area protections across the metropolitan area. Areas with the greatest capacity for housing supply should be identified and relevant frameworks repealed and/or reformed. Future broadscale character protections should be heavily vetted, with appropriate consideration of housing supply impacts.

4. Housing abundance incentives and rewards

Issue: There is often a tenuous link between community improvements (over and above new housing supply and the economic impact of development) and housing intensification. In combination there are no enforcement or reward mechanisms for localities that miss, reach or exceed housing targets. This provides little political incentive to go above and beyond and in effect rewards status quo behaviour.

Some precincts, particularly redevelopment areas, have benefited from up-front investment in renewed streets, open spaces, lot creation, and community amenities. This has assisted in not only helping stakeholders being able to visualise and understand a precinct's direction, but also build support via realisation of broader benefits immediately and often in advance of new residents.

Recommendation 4.1: Explore, establish and publicise localised, phased housing targets in line with WA's Housing Accord targets. Frequent progress updates should be made available on a regular basis, enabling clearer lines of geographic responsibility.

Recommendation 4.2: Consider the establishment of a competitive fund to provide community infrastructure, community revitalisation, and other local improvements to encourage and reward local communities that demonstrate alignment with housing abundance principles. This could be achieved by substantive improvement to frameworks and systems that accommodate increased housing supply in practical forms, locations and scales. Some funds could be provided for communities that have recently or are undergoing significant transition, to support new residents and ongoing growth.

5. Catalytic infrastructure foundations

Issue: Many city transformations have been driven by step-changes and long-term execution of urban mobility improvements. METRONET provides essential public transport network access to the city's greenfield growth areas and is nation-leading in providing services in sync and in-advance of growth. This is a marked improvement from other Australian cities that are in the process of or are still yet to deliver rail services to outer growth areas.

The same principle of accommodating, enabling and shaping growth needs to be applied to inner and middle ring suburb transport infrastructure to provide the foundation piece for intensification that has been elusive for decades.

Recommendation 5.1: Advance and accelerate mid-tier transport planning across inner and middle Perth, with a view to clarifying modes, routes, stops/stations, and phasing. This will enable industry, planners, agencies, and communities to respond, and begin urban transition in advance of, and in support of, future infrastructure delivery.

Recommendation 5.2: In planning for the above, consider localities, precincts and corridors capable of the greatest contributions to housing supply, in addition to existing activity centres and redevelopment precincts. The net benefits of transport infrastructure investment will be more favourable by enabling significant urban transition. Ideally projects can also be supported by unlocking over station development opportunities.

Recommendation 5.3: Ensure that planning frameworks and infrastructure planning occurs in mind of, and well in advance of, the delivery of planned transport connectivity. This will lay the framework for gradual urban transition and help support any future final investment decisions.

Opportunities in focus

Exploring potential opportunities gained in unlocking housing abundance

It is well documented that Perth has very low residential densities in comparison to international and even Australian peer cities. Unambitious planning frameworks and lack of supporting connectivity and community infrastructure can accentuate existing challenges with community sentiment and development viability.

It is worth exploring just how many extra homes Perth could have if it were as dense as other parts of Australia.

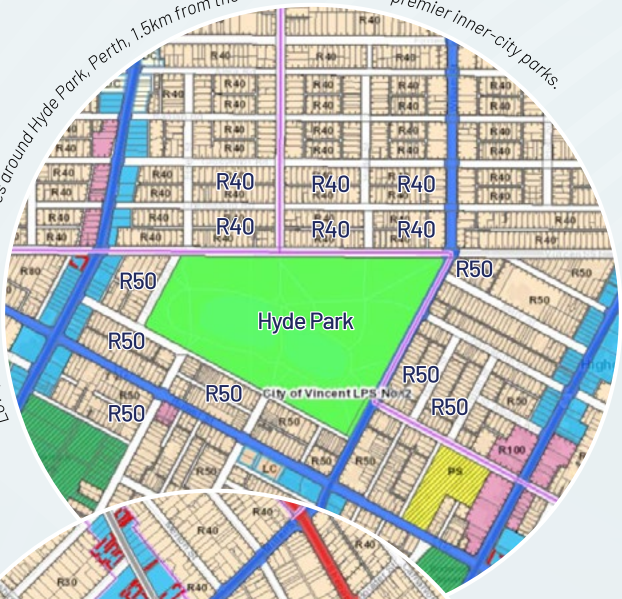
What if some parts of Perth were as dense as other comparable parts of Australia?

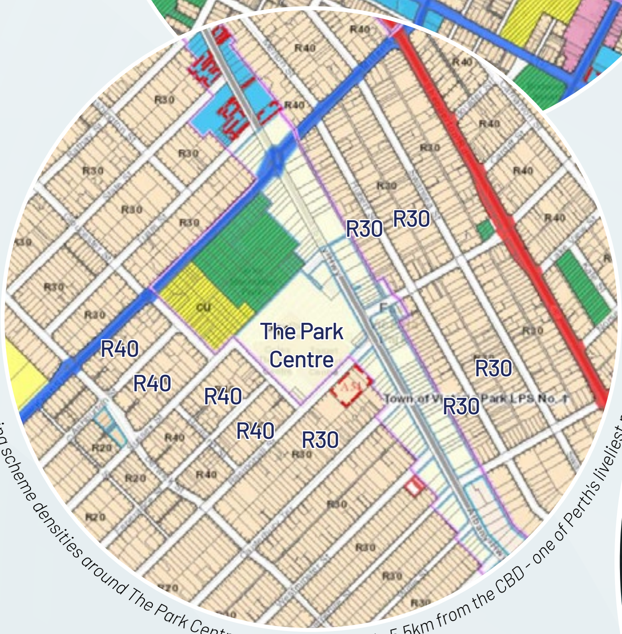
SA2 area in Perth	Existing dwellings / area / 5 year dwelling growth to 2021	Comparable SA2 area	Existing dwellings / area / 5 year dwelling growth to 2021	Additional dwellings if area in Perth was as dense
Perth (West) – Northbridge *Generally most of Perth's central CBD, including West Perth and Northbridge.*	8,126 / 4.6sq.km N/A	Melbourne CBD – West *The west end of Melbourne's CBD.*	34,003 / 2.4sq.km 52.4 per cent	57,046, or over 700 per cent more homes.
Perth (North) – Highgate *Inner northern Perth, between East Perth train station and Loftus Street, and south of Vincent Street.*	6,585 / 3.0sq.km N/A	Glebe – Forest Lodge *Parts of inner west Sydney, west of the CBD.*	11,568 / 2.3 sq.km 10.3 per cent	8,504 or 129 per cent more homes.
East Perth *East Perth including up to and past East Perth Power Station, and including Heirisson Island.*	7,642 / 3.4sq.km N/A	Docklands *Docklands, including some waterways.*	10,826 / 2.4sq.km 66.6 per cent	7,695 or 101 per cent more homes.
East Victoria Park / Carlisle *Between Curtin University and Orrong Road, including key parts of the Albany Highway strip.*	7,990 / 6.3sq.km 2.8 per cent	Woolloongabba *Inner south Brisbane.*	4,048 / 2.4sq.km 49.3 per cent	2,636 or 33 per cent more homes.
Nedlands – Dalkeith – Crawley *Various suburbs including UWA, QEII and along Stirling Highway.*	7,155 / 7.8sq.km 0.25 per cent	St Lucia *Inner city area south-west of Brisbane CBD, including University of Queensland.*	4,627 / 3.4sq.km 8.0 per cent	3,460 or 48 per cent more homes.
Joondalup – Edgewater *Broad area including Joondalup CBD, part of Lake Joondalup and some surrounding suburban areas.*	6,029 / 15.6sq.km 4.9 per cent	Parramatta – North *Concentrated area including Parramatta CBD and surrounding parklands.*	6,176 / 2.2sq.km 23.8 per cent	37,764 or 626 per cent more homes. *This difference is accentuated by the large areas of surrounding suburbs included in in the Joondalup - Edgewater SA2.

APP and ABS, June 2022 [62]

Opportunity lost?

Low planning scheme densities around Hyde Park, Perth, 1.5km from the CBD, one of Perth's premier inner-city parks.





Low planning scheme densities around The Park Centre, East Victoria Park, 5.5km from the CBD - one of Perth's liveliest main strips.

Parramatta has flourished as Sydney's second CBD, with growth being accelerated by major transport and community infrastructure investment.

Despite being further away from its respective CBD, the area around the University of Queensland in Brisbane is almost 50 per cent denser than the areas around UWA/QEII in Perth.

Perth has plenty of room to grow, with more people able to enjoy the extensive infrastructure and amenities in the inner city, while adding to the vibrancy and viability of existing centres and services.

Looking forward

Housing affordability and supply are now issues that are front and centre in industry, political and community dialogue.

West Australians are directly experiencing the consequences of housing supply lagging population growth – scarce rentals, increasing prices, and growing levels of housing uncertainty.

Perth's development sector has demonstrated that it is willing and able to deliver the housing that Perth needs when the settings and frameworks are right. Challenges with construction costs, feasibility and labour will hopefully improve over time. To enable housing supply to accelerate as other conditions improve, the availability and scale of sites able to accommodate increased housing will need to grow. At the same time, better community understanding and direct community improvements will likely be required.

Cities and regions that have let housing availability issues fester for too long are now experiencing intense community reactions. To avoid this in Perth, it is imperative that all policymakers and decision-makers take a broad, long-term view of the housing needs of our growing city – and act accordingly. Misplaced and unproven views around the impacts of infill should not take precedence over the simple goal of ensuring that Perth and WA have enough housing to accommodate, attract and even accelerate growth. This is fundamentally important to enable all sectors of the economy to operate effectively, and for our living standards to be maintained.

Building on the broad sentiment for action across all stakeholders, and ongoing action and reforms from all levels of government, it's time for Perth to embrace a housing abundance philosophy.

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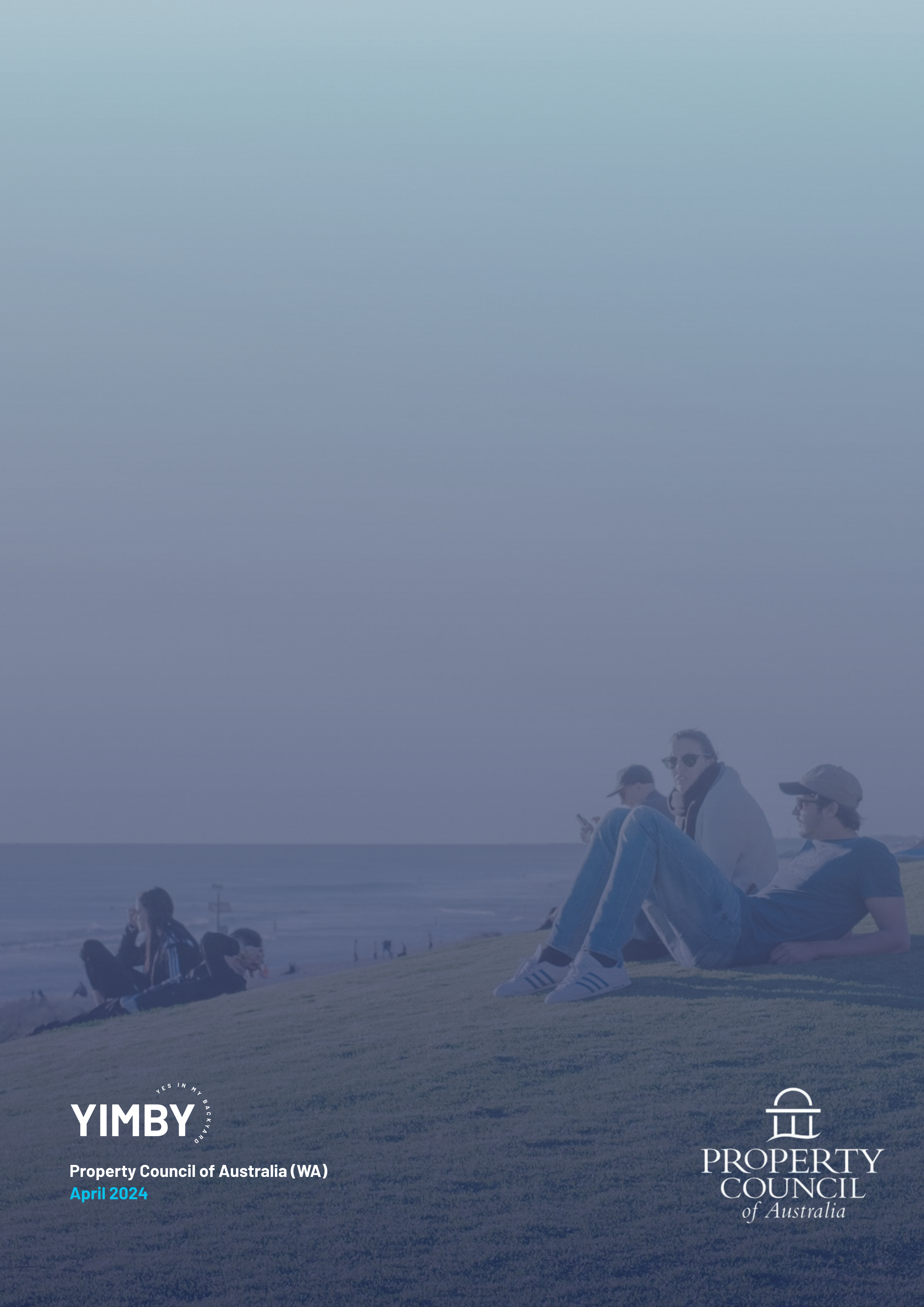

YIMBY
YES IN MY BACKYARD

Property Council of Australia (WA)
April 2024

PROPERTY COUNCIL of Australia