

From: Kelly, Brad J
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2023 2:20 PM
To: Tasmanian Housing Strategy Team
Subject: FW: HOUSING TASMANIA SUBMISSION

Categories: Matilda, Free text

FYI



Brad Kelly (he/him)
Project Manager - Tasmanian Housing Strategy



Homes Tasmania
Level 1, 46 Mount Street, Burnie TAS, 7320
homestasmania.com.au

In recognition of the deep history and culture of this island, I acknowledge and pay my respects to all Tasmanian Aboriginal people; the past and present custodians of the Land.

Please consider the environment before printing this email.

From: Homes Tasmania Media <media@homes.tas.gov.au>
Sent: Friday, 7 July 2023 1:54 PM
To: Tasmanian Housing Strategy <tasmanianhousingstrategy@homes.tas.gov.au>; [REDACTED]
Cc: Homes Tasmania Media <media@homes.tas.gov.au>
Subject: FW: HOUSING TASMANIA SUBMISSION

FYI



Skye Kelly (she/her)
Manager Communications and Media

From: Ray Norman <raynorman7250@gmail.com>

Sent: Friday, 7 July 2023 1:04 PM

To: Barnett, Guy <guy.barnett@parliament.tas.gov.au>; Homes Tasmania Media <media@homes.tas.gov.au>; The Premier (DPaC) <premier@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Office of Local Government (DPaC) <lga@dpac.tas.gov.au>; Street, Minister (DPaC) <Minister.Street@dpac.tas.gov.au>

Cc: Rosemary Armitage MLC <rosemary.armitage@parliament.tas.gov.au>; Archer, Bridget (MP) <bridget.archer.mp@aph.gov.au>; Palmer, Joanne <jo.palmer@parliament.tas.gov.au>; Duigan Nicholas <nick.duigan@parliament.tas.gov.au>; Kim Leever <kim.leever@gmail.com>; Craig Thomson <craig.thomson@austcommunitymedia.com.au>; Barnett, Guy <guy.barnett@parliament.tas.gov.au>; Luke Edmunds <luke.edmunds@parliament.tas.gov.au>; White, Rebecca <rebecca.white@parliament.tas.gov.au>; O'Byrne, Michelle <Michelle.obyrne@parliament.tas.gov.au>; I43-1 <institute43-1@bigpond.com>; maxinehodgetts <maxinehodgetts@bigpond.com>; Cassy OConnor <cassy.oconnor@parliament.tas.gov.au>; L'ton Chamber of Commerce <info@lcc.asn.au>

Subject: HOUSING TASMANIA SUBMISSION

You don't often get email from raynorman7250@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Minister,

I submit this feedback regarding your government's response to Tasmania's housing crisis. By presenting the response in this way the attempt is being made to circumvent the possibility of it being bureaucratically buried. No good purpose would be served in it being filed alongside whatever other submissions have been received and selectively considered as is apparently the case.

The key point that the submission makes is that the notion of 'homelessness' seriously misrepresents the lived experiences of a great many people suffering 'housing stress'. As a consequence, the responses of governance – *Federal, State & Local* – are all too likely to rely on status quo understandings that are all too likely result in unproductive strategies being put in place.

You will note that the is available to the public and that in due course responses to it will be canvassed widely given the seriousness of Tasmania's/Australia's housing crisis.

I, along with my collaborators, look forward to your acknowledgement of your receipt of this submission and any response you or your department choose to make. In the event that you choose not to respond by Friday July 21 it will be assumed that you and/or your department are disinclined to acknowledge its existence and/or take it into account.

Yours sincerely,

Ray Norman

Ray Norman
<zingHOUSEunlimited>
The lifestyle design enterprise and research network



“A body of men holding themselves accountable to nobody ought not to be trusted by anybody.” Thomas Paine

“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept” David Morrison



We acknowledge the First Peoples – the Traditional Owners of the lands where we live and work, and recognise their continuing connection to land, water and community. We pay respect to Elders – past, present and emerging – and acknowledge the important role Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people continue to play within the research zingHOUSEunlimited undertakes.

FOR YOUR INFORMATION & CONSIDERATION

A BETTER LAUNCESTON NOW

A platform for Launcestonians seeking real change



<https://betterlauncestonnow.blogspot.com/p/housing-tasmania-submission.html>

A screenshot of a Facebook post from "Homes Tasmania". The text of the post reads: "It's not too late to have your say on the future of Tasmania's housing system! We want to hear your thoughts on our draft Tasmanian Housing Strategy so that we can release our final version later this year. Visit <https://tashousingstrategy.homes Tasmania.com.au/> to leave your feedback... See more". Below the text is a graphic featuring a map of Tasmania with a house icon, and the text "TASMANIAN HOUSING STRATEGY". The graphic also includes images of people in a modern home and a construction site. At the bottom of the graphic, it says "We want your feedback" and includes the "Tasmanian Government" logo.

[LINK](#)

CONTEXT

Against the background that in Tasmania governance at all levels apparently has great difficulty in regard identifying the appropriate expertise required to meet the actual requirements of governance.

As the situation grows more urgent by the day the shortcomings seemingly grow accordingly. Consequently, the case for '*government*' initiating a Citizen's Assembly/Jury or Community Housing Form, likewise becomes more compelling by the day. While the appropriately credentialed '*experts*' might not be employed in '*public service*' they are present among government's constituencies.

In attempt to explain the '*for why*' it would be useful to pay attention to the following:

- The requisite '*expertise actually exists*' in the community to the extent that it demonstrably does not in governance – *State or Local*; and
- The facts are that effectively, Government and Councils only rarely have elected representatives nor '*executive staff*' with professional '*placemaking*' qualifications and/or experience; and
- The fact is that reportedly Tasmania's Govt. Housing Department does not apparently directly employ qualified architects, housing designers, and as a consequence, it delivers what is understood to be common denominator one-size-fits-all housing that clearly does not meet the 21ST C NEEDS of a great many people experiencing '*housing stress*'. Consequently, this in turn compromises its Development Applications to Councils relative to current social housing needs where there is an imperative to deliver '*change*' relative to current social and fiscal circumstances; and
- The fact is that Tasmania's Planning Regulations are no longer '*fit-for-purpose*' and thus better fit the housing circumstance of the kind that is the lived experience of elected representatives, the regulators, the public servant planners, and administrators, employed to oversight them and who are all too often under qualified to hold the positions they hold; and
- The fact is that [Citizen's Assemblies/Forums](#) are exemplars of [Participatory Democracy \[LINK\]](#) that is open transparent and '*deliberative*' in ways that offers '*a voice*' for those being '*governed*' towards them being more adequately and more appropriately governed and served.

To the extent that these observations need to be tested the ideal opportunity for that would be under the aegis of an *independent Citizen's Assembly/Jury or Community Housing Form* conducted at arm's length from government.

In order for any '*forum*' to be unconstrained by any political and/or administrative agendas and to be reflective of the constituency's lived experiences it needs to seem to be truly independent and seem to be so.

In the absence of anything representing the political will a growing cohort of people are looking to the Federal Govt to provide the required leadership. The tools are in evidence albeit that their employment is of concern since the will to put them to work is apparently absent.

FOUR FUNDAMENTAL CONSIDERATIONS RARELY TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

The factors set out below are typically left to intuitive self-awareness yet they are rarely considered when developing planning cum **'placemaking strategies'**. **'Housing'** strategies are fundamental yet on one hand they are to do with **'human rights'** but on the other that has been distorted where human rights have become overshadowed **'investment' imperatives'**.

The four fundamentals being:

1. ... To survive by whatever means – *to ensure that we have adequate access to good air, sufficient water and food*; and
2. ... To identify within **'the group'** – *family, clan, tribe language group*; and
3. ... To procreate – *genetically and/or intellectually*; and
4. ... To establish a safe shelter and **'home place'** – *a place where we are welcomed, feel safe and ensure that the first three imperatives can be realised* .

Housing Tasmania talks about adopting a Housing First policy as a guiding principle that responds to **"homelessness"** that arguably quite misses the point and in ways that almost immediately translates BUREAU speak for **'shelter for charity cases'** rather than HOME making. The policy is not really about delivering 'homes' and on the evidence not nearly enough shelter either for people suffering the consequences of **'housing stress'**.

There is a yawning gap between the POLITICAL rhetoric and the lived experiences of Tasmanians experiencing **'housing stress'** and the debilitating loss of their HOME places. They become the flotsam & jetsam of a political mindset that can only see **'housing'** as an **'investment opportunity'** come hell or high water – *politically its all about money making albeit on the part of the 'tradies' et al.*

For instance, In Finland back in 2008, tent villages and huts standing between trees in the parks of Helsinki had reached crisis point. People were building makeshift homes in the middle of Finland's capital city. They were exposed to harsh weather conditions and all that is visible around Australia and in Tasmania's cities.

Housing Tasmania's rhetoric states that its provision of housing that is not conditional on addressing a person's social, health and wellbeing issues – *all well and good.*

- The rhetoric goes on to talk about building on the legislative principle that housing is a fundamental right – *all well and good.*
- The rhetoric talk up the government's "record investment to deliver 10 000 social and affordable homes by 2032" – *a decade away from the rhetoric's initiation.*
- The rhetoric says that the government will work towards a **"Housing First approach"** to address "homelessness" – *no hint here of an awareness of the fiscal circumstances are a driving force for housing stress.*
- The rhetoric goes on and talks about providing permanent and stable housing as a means of early intervention.

Moreover, the rhetoric talks about people with complex needing, services such as gambling, drug and alcohol counselling, mental health treatment, and other wrap around support. The rhetoric talk up all this as being fundamental to ensure people's *'tenancy'* can be maintained. Here in a couple of revealing sentences the *'homeless'* – *rather people suffering housing stress inn an investment paradigm* – are cast as socially delinquent and dysfunctional , the underclass, the undeserving poor, and cultural outsiders.

In the vernacular of *STREETspeak* they are known by the shorthand compound collective noun as "THOSE*people*". If they turn up near where you live one calls the police to have them moved on to be sent somewhere to be moved on yet again, and agai, and again. Sadly, it is something some charities, and local governments, do while they talk about doing "*something*".



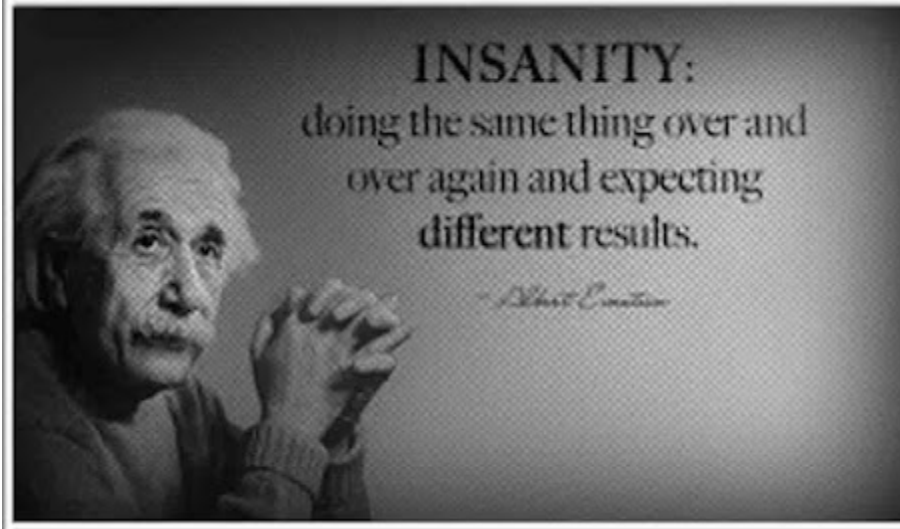
All this becomes more than concerning when a politician asserts that, paraphrased, "housing" is a political issue that can only be dealt with politically.

I submit that this is the unsustainable status quo overtly expressing itself out loud.

Nonetheless, *'anthropologically'* politics are the least of it in that it seems that a political disconnect has evolved and that fundament social and cultural imperatives have been lost sight of. More concerning is the apparent *'rusting on'* to the *'status quo'*, albeit unsustainable, and the political disinclination to engage in an open and inclusive critical deliberations that interrogates what it is that informs and drives status quoism – *and all that is invested in it.*

Ronald Reagan called out the the status quo for it being Latin for *'the mess we are in'* and down through time his analogy has rung true. Pessimists might well complain about the the status quo, while the optimists among us will be expecting it all to change. Nonetheless, the realist will be ready to adjust to and work on bringing about meaningful change through different mechanisms.

INTERROGATING 21ST C HOUSING OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES



The reports that census data alerts us to unacceptable numbers of Australians are experiencing housing stress are alarming. Indeed, they point to an ongoing and possibly an intractable problem if left to current political mindsets. **When Albert Einstein said "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results" he was talking about situations like this where people become 'collateral damage' in the wake status quoism.**

The notion that there is a common denominator solution that once applied to the housing of people is sheer folly. That there might be such a *'thing'*, that adequately and in a diverse range of socio-geographic circumstances, actually fails the credibility test. While it may be something that public servants tasked by the political classes may believe, the one-size-fits all mindset must fail to deliver in spectacular ways – *and unsurprisingly this has already happened in post WW2 reconstruction projects.*

As Indirect Representational Democracy (*IRD*) faces new and more demanding challenges. That in is, challenges brought on by evolving technologies that place increasing demands for **Participatory Democracy and Participatory Governance** it become increasingly evident that it is so.

The evolution of **Citizen's Juries and Assemblies** are very much a part this community thrust towards 21st C political transparency and accountability. Citizen's deliberation demonstrably makes for better democratic outcomes.

CITIZEN JURIES

An introduction to deliberative democracy

newDEMOCRACY

newDemocracy is an independent, non-partisan research and development organisation. We aim to discover, develop, demonstrate, and promote complementary alternatives which will restore trust in public decision making.

Luca Belgiorno-Nettis AM
Founder



Iain Walker
Executive Director






Citizens' Jury on Energy Generation (2012)



Government of South Australia



Research Facilitation

Evaluation Guidelines for Representative Deliberative Processes

[LINK](#)

It is becoming increasingly evident that top down legislation within the IRD model is failing to adequately address the outcomes of its own making. When it comes to the increasingly evident failures to meet the legitimate constituency expectations relative to diverse social cum cultural realities the defectiveness is easily seen. Also, in regard to the provision of housing opportunities clearly there are shortfalls. Moreover, they are not only statistically measurable but in terms of *'placemaking'* they are something more than desolating for a large cohort of *'homemakers'*.

The assumption that the *'status quo mindset'* in governance – *local governance in particular* – can sustain its relevance in 21st C cultural landscape that is changing significantly is an absurdity. It should be no surprise that dispossessed, disaffected, and sometimes alienated cohorts of people would be looking for a *'voice'* in governance. It is more than concerning that *'people'* get to be effectively locked out of any discourse that might take place – *often in camera and in the dark*.

A system of governance that does not pay attention to the totality of its constituency's moral, cultural and emotional needs is one that aspires to walk all over the dispossessed, the disaffected along with the wellbeing and the interests of some assumed minority, is untoward. It is a circumstance that lacks the moral authority and social licence to govern and that is so, given that it ultimately it must mask its own cruelty – *and is all too often driven by bureaucracy's self-interests and convenience*.

Good governance should never aim tell its constituency what to do. Rather it should be accountable and provide its constituents with the knowledge with which networks of

people can decide what would be best for them to do – *and when possible and required, the means to do it.*

Against this background it should be no surprise to anyone who pays attention to current socio-political cum cultural circumstances that governance – *particularly so in the Western world* – is being exposed to changed and ever changing social and cultural realities. Much of this can be attributed to the impacts of postcolonial sensibilities and the aftermath of 19th C colonialism and ongoing devastating conflicts.

Likewise, it should not be surprising that the '*deliberative decision making*' to be found in precolonial social and cultural circumstances are now being given some currency as the dispossessed and disaffected look for an effective '*voice*' that fits their circumstance and their aspirations. In a nutshell, the voiceless are increasingly giving '*voice*' to their voicelessness.

And, against this backgrounding it is unsurprising that the beneficiaries of top down, authoritarian, and absolutism might be defending '*status quoism*'. Likewise, that they should be seen to be fortifying cherished positions given that they have '*skin in the game*' that too is foreseeable – *in local governance what is 'personally invested' – fiscally and otherwise – tends to be something a lot more than remarkable.*

In turn, that the demand for, and the acceptability of, Citizen's Assemblies/Juries grows, resisting what they have to offer will no doubt diminish. The resistance to the inevitability of increasing demands for participatory and deliberative democratic outcomes is ever likely to be futile.

Here there is the *story of King Canute* and the tide which has become an apocryphal anecdote that illustrates the piety and humility of a good King. For those unfamiliar with the story, Canute demonstrated to his flattering courtiers that he had no control whatsoever over the elements – *the incoming tide by way of example* – explaining that secular power is helpless compared to the supreme power of GOD and the laws of nature. Canute demonstrated the futility of "trying to turn back the tide". Status quoist, politicians, bureaucrats et al might well take note of this anecdote.

Under current circumstance – *as they currently present themselves* – the case for top-down indirect representational democracy diminishes somewhat disruptively in much the same way as the forces of nature are intransigent. The lot of all those experiencing '*housing stress*' must not be left to the fecklessness of, and the all too often whim driven, governance archetype to be found in status quoism.

Therefore, with the latent expertise in the wider community in mind, the case for *Citizen's Assemblies/Juries* becomes increasingly compelling. For governance at any level not to acknowledge this is to deny the likely opportunities available via collaboration, cooperation and inclusive discourses.

When *Mahatma Gandhi* spoke of despair, he recalled that through history in the end the way of truth and love have always won out. He reminded his followers that there have been tyrants and murderers, and that for a time, they might seem invincible. However, in the end, they were always brought down. It is a thought to be held high in our collective imaginations – *and always.*

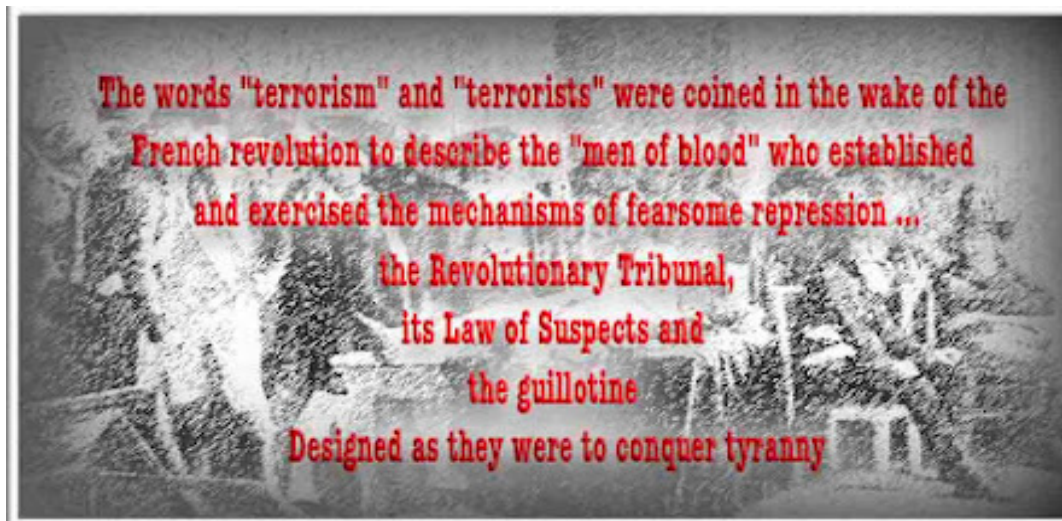
Similarly, and from the frontline **Albert Camus** noted that *"the entire history of mankind is, in any case, nothing but a prolonged fight to the death for the conquest of universal prestige and absolute power."*

Participatory Direct Deliberative Democracy offers more hope for those experiencing housing stress than anything that resembles the status quo as we have come to know it.

Winston Churchill famously said, *'Many forms of Government have been tried, and will be tried in this world of sin and woe. No one pretends that democracy is perfect or all-wise. Indeed it has been said that democracy is the worst form of Government except for all those other forms that have been tried from time to time...'* **11 November 1947.**

That this quote can be used by those defending the status quo it is nothing short of a denunciation of 21st C critical thinking relative to a changing world. What is more, it fails to acknowledge the histories embedded within Churchill's thinking given the times in which he said it.

Possibly it is not all bad that many people do not understand our banking, monetary system and governments' interdependence. If they did, they would be on the streets with their placards, petrol bombs and possibly all manner of unlikely weaponry before the sun sets – *and the lynch mobs might even get busy too as they shouted Equality, Fraternity, Liberty.*



LOOKING FOR OPTIONS AND OPPORTUNITIES

If against the backgrounding presented here it turns out that the Tasmanian Government is disinclined to proactively engage with the wider community in an attempt to find a socially and culturally inclusive way to address housing stress in a 21st C context it will be a sorry day for all concerned.

One option being canvassed in recent times is the possibility of a **21st C community housing cooperative**. In floating the concept of a 21st C cooperative that is a self-sustaining community enterprise, its worthwhileness on one hand seems obvious.

However, on the other hand the fact such a thing is not already in place that is also something worthy of consideration. What is the inhibitor here?

Whatever, there is a job to be done, and that is to create more *'homes'* – and that more so than more houses in some version of common denominator one-size-fits-all cultural landscape. Not without relevance such *'landscapes'* have been characterised as *"MacBurbia"* in a cultural landscape devised for a reality that is just not there in way it is imagined in a political context.

Of particular interest is that in the Nordic countries there is a wide range of housing policies and the prominence of housing cooperatives, which assist both renters and those wanting to own a secure, high-quality home.

With these *'policies'* and the resulting *'enterprises'* the processes via which they come to be can be problematic as might be those that sustain them. Nonetheless, clearly what is important is the socio-political imperatives that provide for them and that sustain them.

Interestingly, Sweden's cooperative sector amounts to **22%** of total housing stock. Norway's represent **15%** nationwide, and **40%** in the capital, Oslo. In Denmark, more than **20%** of the population live in cooperative housing.

Also, the Finnish government has a *"Housing First"* principle, adopted in 2007, which says people have *'a right to'* decent housing and along with it, *'a right to'* useful social services. The Tasmanian Govt. is mouthing the rhetoric here yet it appears that anything like a real commitment to deliver on anything like Finland's model is a mirage destined to disappear as one apparently gets closer and closer.

By comparison, cooperative housing in Australia comprises less than **1%** of the Australian housing sector, with about 200 housing cooperatives mostly focused on providing affordable rental housing. Why aren't there more?

Establishing a body to manage funds contributed to a cooperative of the kind flagged here is non-trivial. Launceston and the *kanamaluka*TAMAR/Esk region like communities everywhere have organisations, some being charities, with the wherewithal and the administrative infrastructure, and arguably the expertise as well, to:

- Muster resources in *'the community'*;
- Undertake the publicity such as that which can be reliably found in communities worldwide; and
- Hold the credibility and trust worthiness important to be there in order to develop crowd funding initiatives etc.

There can be little doubt that within *'the community'* many, if not most, of these organisations, often operating as charities, whatever, would see themselves as being up to the task of actually handling a housing cooperative if it was part of their *raison d'etre*.

Arguably, for a range of reasons it is just the case that very clearly they are not interested and it appears that they are disinclined to envisage themselves that way. Why is this so?

Nonetheless, the question hanging, if such an initiative is seen as *'worthy'*, why up to now haven't any of these *'operations'* been *'up for it'*. Why might that be the case?

A sense of comfort with the status quo might well be a factor given all that is invested in their *'reasons for being'* relative to all that.

Whoever it is, or whatever body it might be that comes about, or is enlisted to, manage funds invested in a social community enterprise such as a *'social housing cooperative'* would have administrative overheads that would need to be factored into such a cooperative cum enterprise's strategic planning.

Standing charities might turn out as being not a realistic driving force, thus this *'recurrent administrative funding/support'* might well be provided to some extent by *'government at all levels'* on the basis of delivery on competitive key performance indicators – *social dividends in lieu of fiscal dividends especially*.

There are three *'models'* for cooperatives in Tasmania the model rules being:

- [Click here to download model rules of a non-distributing Co-operative with share capital](#)
- [Click here to download model rules of a non-distributing Co-operative without share capital](#)
- [Click here to download model rules of a distributing Co-operative](#)

Too often it said, "It can't be done." Every community has its naysayers – *many in abundance*. When an idea stretches beyond the reach of an operation or a jurisdiction, or a *'management'* and an official says, "It can't be done," it usually means: "We've never done things that way before" and the prospect of doing so is just too daunting ... we might lose something ... we are secure with the status quo.

However, there is a housing crisis that is not going to go away anytime soon while governance – *Local & State* – sits on their hands failing to engage realistically with their constituencies.

Then the way ahead is to identify the thinkers and the doers in the community, precinct, district who share a vision, who have like needs, who see value in a space and who hold a wish for it to be a *'purposeful place'*.

In the context of *indirect representational democracy* – *the status quo* – in order to effect change, it is said that we need to talk to representative members of a local government. That is, the people who are there and elected/tasked to represent individual's and a community's aspirations in the context of a place, a precinct, a district, whatever. Whatever, the status quo, on the evidence, is totally unsustainable.

Currently, these representatives have all too often delegated their strategic policy making authority to management. Consequently, it turns out that the unrepresentative management virtually usurps the elected representatives policy making authority. Whatever, the status quo, on the evidence, is totally unsustainable.

To the extent that some form cooperative endeavour might assist in breaking the nexus that currently sustains the status quo, the risk can be mitigated cooperatively and collaboratively. Accordingly, the British mathematician and philosopher, [Bertrand Russell](#) he said that *"the only thing that will redeem mankind is cooperation."*

Largely, the loss of agency, the loss of a sense of moral equality and the apparent loss of political equality comes about for people experiencing housing stress. On the evidence this is due to a class of ideologically driven political imperatives is intensified currently by entrenched in the status quoism invested the notion that a 'house' is an 'investment' – *not a home that is a human right.*

It also turns out that this loss of agency and equality all too quickly manifests itself in mental distress and a sense of personal humiliation with a trickle down effect that impacts on the sustainability of an economy.

It seems that increasingly community cooperative and collaborative efforts are being canvassed more and more towards achieving specific outcomes. It also seems that the initiatives are locally driven and independent of globalised marketing imperatives. These 'cooperatives' came in to being for a myriad of reasons, one being local food security.

For instance, Fightback Farmers: A Feeding Australia Together cooperative initiative is the subject of an ABC documentary featuring local heroes showing why cooperative farming could be a solution for modern agriculture and its communities – *available on ABC iview.*

Similarly, recently on the ABC's Gardening Australia a segment entitled [School of Harcourt](#) explored the possibilities available towards local food security via diversifying 'farming practices' on a family orchard in Victoria – [click here to view the segment](#). Again the [ABC's Country Breakfast](#) program regularly explores cooperative and collaborative effort relative to effective food production in agriculture.

Against this backgrounding it can be expected that inclusive conversations with communities, layers of communities, holds not insignificant prospects of there being innovative and more inclusive ways forward in regard to providing access to 21st C relevant housing infrastructure. The notion that a local governance management regime can effectively override the elected representatives' deliberation is more than lamentable.

So, to say that the community lacks the appetite to meet its housing needs differently seems to be a notion embedded in the an ideological imperative to do with maintaining the now outmoded indirect representational democracy model. That the wisdom assumed to be in that model is increasingly being contested and likewise cooperative governance models are being tested in real time.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

Putting the hollow rhetoric to one side, and carefully considering modelling such as Finland's *HOUSING FIRST MODEL*, there is a model for the world to start from. It seems that it is possible to show that it is possible to imagine eradicating '*housing stress*'. Whatever, the notion that '*trust us we are your government*' has any veracity ii is

an unlikely proposition. At a deeper level, if we are learning that our governance is obscene, disgusting, and untrustworthy, it is this the very best preparation for being in a governance role. And is it the very best preparation for becoming a representative - *and to be distrustful of representational governance.*

If a government programme includes a meaningful reforms that are of concern to those working with the most vulnerable we might expect meaningful change.

If the measures envisaged in the government programme are particularly targeted at the everyday life and housing of people on low incomes we might expect meaningful change. Likewise, when housing benefits grow and there are changes to local governance we might expect meaningful change.

Decision-makers and experts from around the world are visiting Finland to see how its *HOUSING FIRST MODEL* has reached a situation where it is actually realistic to talk about ending '*homelessness*' – *rather housing stress* – in the near future.

In addition to targeted housing stress work and the *HOUSING FIRST MODEL*, meaningful inclusive community engagement, and repeatedly, it highlightds the structural factors in society that keep the risk of *housing stress* low.

It is important to take care of the factors that ensure housing stability. This will support people's wellbeing and their ability to build their own lives – *ordinary everyday lives.*

Importantly, it will enable cohorts of people talked about as '*THOSEpeople*' – *the addicted undeserving poor et al* – to find *HOMEplaces* where they are welcomed and feel safe and from where they can productive members of a community.

More to the point, in the caring professions it is a '*gold standard*' that clients/patients are to be treated with **UPR** – *unconditional positive regard* – because to describe what is on offer as '*love*' it would be inappropriate. If you've experiences such '*care*' you'll remember it. Likewise, people blighted by '*housing stress*' typically find themselves being treated with *BDI* – *bureaucratic distain & indifference* – and they remember it all too well.

In fact it turns out '*THOSEpeople*' when they experience **UPR** can feasibly turn into tenants with a tenancy agreement. Some might well be able to service housing loans. They also might find themselves in communities where there are social workers who have their offices accessible right near '*home*' and able to help with issues such as applications for social benefits and many other things. If '*THOSEpeople*' are treated well the sun will continue to rise and the sky is unlikely to fall in because of their empowerment.



Seven myths about homelessness busted

At the start of Homelessness Week (6-12 August), RMIT University's Professor Guy Johnson busts some of the biggest myths and misconceptions around homelessness.



06 August 2018

Guy Johnson, Australia's first Professor of Urban Housing and Homelessness, draws on the most recent Census data to break down seven myths about homelessness.

Myth 1: Most people experiencing homelessness sleep on the streets ... Rough sleepers are the most visible face of homelessness but they represent only a small fraction (about 1 in 12) of the homeless

population. Most people experiencing homelessness, particularly women with children, go out of their way not to be noticed, staying with friends, in emergency accommodation or living out of their cars.

Myth 2: Most people experiencing homelessness are drug addicts or alcoholics ... About 60 per cent do not have a drug or alcohol problem and of those that do, the majority develop this after they become homeless. This is a troubling statistic that highlights the associated risks of homelessness.

Myth 3: Most homeless people have mental health problems ... About one third of Australia's homeless have serious mental health issues. Similar to drug and alcohol statistics, up to half of these people developed their mental health problems after becoming homeless.

Myth 4: Most homeless people break the law ... Statistically, homeless people are actually more likely to be victims of crime than perpetrators. This highlights the increased vulnerability that comes with being homeless.

Myth 5: Giving to people who are begging only encourages homelessness ... There is no evidence to support the claim that giving incentivises homelessness. People experiencing homelessness want safe and secure housing, the same as everyone else.

Myth 6: Most of those who are homeless choose to be... The majority are poor and have experienced a health problem or a financial shock or cannot stay at home because of violence or abuse and cannot afford alternative accommodation.

Myth 7: There's enough emergency accommodation ... Australia does have some crisis and emergency accommodation but agencies are being overwhelmed by demand as numbers continue to grow.

Professor Guy Johnson is a panel member during the two day National Homelessness Conference (6 -7 August) that launches a week of activity designed to raise awareness, and promote solutions to, Australia's growing homelessness problem. Johnson leads the partnership between RMIT and Victorian housing organisation Unison which is drawing on academic research and street smarts to improve the lives of 650,000 Australians facing housing issues.

Story: Grace Taylor

NB: Professor Guy Johnson is a Research-only member at at the RMIT Social & Global Studies Centre.

Professor Johnson is the inaugural Unison Housing Chair of Urban Housing and Homelessness. He leads the Unison Housing Research Lab at RMIT University, a unique education and research collaboration between RMIT University and Unison Housing, Victoria's largest social housing provider. The Lab, which was established in 2017, has delivered a wide range of research and educational outputs that address critical issues in the provision of housing assistance and homelessness interventions to disadvantaged Victorians.