parity

A Call for Contributions – June 2016

The June "Responding to Homelessness in Outer-Metropolitan Areas" edition of *Parity*

Introduction

Homelessness in Australia is often perceived and represented as an issue mainly relevant to capital cities and their inner-city areas. However, there is increasing evidence of growing homelessness in the outer-metropolitan areas of our major cities. Homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas, its causes and character, is often quite distinct from homelessness in the metropolis and the inner-city.

Arguably these areas of often high growth and development on the metropolitan fringes of the capital cities have many social and demographic characteristics, features and issues significantly different to those of the inner city. These differences apply to homelessness as well.

In order to facilitate the development of state-wide and indeed national responses to homelessness, it is clearly necessary to understand the specific characteristics of homelessness in the outer-metropolitan areas where larger and larger numbers of people are living.

Towards this end, this edition of *Parity* is dedicated to examining some of the issues specific to homelessness in the outer-metropolitan areas as well as to exploring some of the new responses that have been developed to tackle these issues.

Ten years ago, *Parity* explored the issues of housing vulnerability and homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas of Australia. Again in this edition, the aim will be to explore the distinct causes, characteristics and impacts of outer-metropolitan homelessness, housing stress and vulnerability, by examining a number of key themes. These themes include; Housing Affordability, Affordable Living, Homelessness Pathways and Growth Issues.

The framework for discussion and the questions and topics below should not be seen as restrictive and prospective contributors should feel free to cover other relevant issues and questions.

A Framework for Discussion
Housing Affordability

Housing 'affordability' is considered a strong driver of population growth. Rental affordability is often greater in outer-metropolitan areas. Housing that is more affordable for lower-moderate income home buyers is now largely confined to outer-metropolitan suburbs. However, social housing is in decline generally as well as in these areas.

While outer-metropolitan and growth areas have the most affordable housing, they also often have the highest rate of evictions. The levels of housing-stress are also often greater in outer-metropolitan areas as evidenced by higher rates of mortgage foreclosures.

Some suggested questions:

- What are the drivers of housing affordability in growth areas? Why is the rate of evictions and homelessness growing, despite this relative affordability?
- What are the housing options for people experiencing homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas? For example, social housing, caravan parks, rooming houses.
- What are the experiences of access to affordable housing that are specific to outer-metropolitan areas for different cohorts – for example, young people, young families, older people, people with a disability.
- There has been an increase in rooming houses in outer-metropolitan areas. What do they look like? What has been the service or regulatory response? What would be a useful approach?
- What could a private rental response look like, in the face of continued inaction on social housing? What are some good examples of what works in outer-metropolitan areas?
- How is affordable housing infrastructure currently planned for in outer- metropolitan areas? How could the strategic planning process be improved to better incorporate affordable housing?
- Should affordable housing be considered a community facility and funded through developer contributions?
- What other market-driven approaches to housing affordability have been successful elsewhere?
- How could inclusionary zoning be adapted to deliver affordable housing in outer-metropolitan areas?

Affordable Living

The failures of the housing market, as demonstrated by increases in evictions and homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas, indicates that the discussion of affordable housing should not be undertaken without also considering the related issues of affordable living.

At the same time, the greater availability of more affordable housing often comes at the expense of the institutional and economic structures that support basic living needs in a local area. These include access health and related services, education, affordable transport, healthy food and employment opportunities. Families are forced into car dependency and are vulnerable to rising costs of petrol.

Broadly speaking, outer-metropolitan and in particular growth areas are characterised by:

- lower than average incomes
- higher rates of unemployment
- relatively higher levels of youth disengagement with higher education and workforce participation
- lower levels of professional employment
- relatively higher levels of socio-economic disadvantage
- poorer provision of public transport and heavy reliance on private vehicle-based travel
- higher levels of social and economic vulnerability.

Some suggested questions:

- What is driving living 'unaffordability' in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What is needed to support affordable living in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What innovation is happening to support affordable living in outer-metropolitan areas? Can you provide a case study of what works at a local level that could be scaled to other areas?
- What is needed at a broader level to support affordable living in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What are the impacts of the lack of community services and service infrastructure like material aid outlets, financial counselling services, educational institutions as well as mental health and drug and alcohol services in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What are the service implications of the broad demographic profile of outer-metropolitan areas including the larger numbers of families, particularly young families with young children?
- What has been the response in outer-metropolitan areas to the relatively larger number of young people experiencing homelessness?
- What are the social housing options for people experiencing housing affordability issues and housing stress in outer-metropolitan areas?

Homelessness Pathways in Outer-Metropolitan Areas

Both the demographic and housing profile of outer-metropolitan areas means that the causes and consequences of homelessness are recognisably distinct and it is possible to identify how and where they differ from the experience of homelessness in the capital and inner cities.

While of course there are there are some common pathways into homelessness – relationship breakdown (particularly in relation to experiences of domestic or family violence), young people escaping abuse in the home, mental health issues, alcohol and other drugs, and financial crisis, the centrality of housing and housing affordability issues means that the "housing pathway" into homelessness is arguably more prevalent in outer-metropolitan areas.

Some suggested questions:

- What are the pathways into homelessness for people living in outer-metropolitan areas?
- How is homelessness and housing vulnerability experienced by the different cohorts in outer-metropolitan areas, for example, older people, people with a disability, women and children escaping domestic and family violence and young people?
- What is the service response to homelessness and its causes, for example, housing stress in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What crisis services and infrastructure is are available? What is needed?
- What are some of the innovative responses to addressing pathways into homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas? Could these innovative responses be replicated on a larger scale?
- What action is occurring at a state and national level in response to the distinct features and characteristics of homelessness in outer-metropolitan areas? What would be a good approach?

The Impacts of Growth

The majority of Australia's population growth is accommodated in growth areas on the urban fringe. Despite this long-standing function of outer-metropolitan areas, planning for the services and the infrastructure required for this growing population – for example, responding to homelessness and family violence, mental health and problematic drug use issues and the needs of people with a disability and older people – lags well behind property development. This lag is also the case for universal infrastructure, such as schools and health services.

Some suggested questions:

- Is a plan required for these services and infrastructure to match population growth?
- Paying for infrastructure – how is the developer contributions system working? Should it be used for crisis accommodation and other infrastructure related to social needs?
- What data is available to support infrastructure and in particular social planning in outer-metropolitan areas? What does the existing data tell us about the needs and requirements of growth areas and no-growth areas?
- How could inclusionary zoning support better outcomes for the provision of infrastructure and social services? What would be required to make this work in the current housing market?
- What are some innovative approaches to housing and strategic planning?
- What are some of the approaches for education and employment generation to support housing vulnerability and homelessness prevention in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What are some examples of housing strategies that are achieving good outcomes in outer-metropolitan areas?
- What is the impact of social isolation in growth areas? What is driving social isolation in outer-metropolitan areas? What is being done to overcome social isolation in outer-metropolitan area?

Contributing to the June "Responding to Homelessness in Outer-Metropolitan Areas" edition of *Parity*

Deadline: All contributions need to be submitted by COB Friday June 17th 2016.

Submissions: All contributions should be submitted as Word attachments to an email addressed to *Parity*@chp.org.au

Word length: Contributions can be up to 1,600 words. This equates to a double page spread in *Parity*. Single page articles can be up to 800 words in length. Contributions of a greater length should be discussed with the *Parity* Editor.

Questions: If you have any questions at all about contributing to this edition please contact the *Parity* Editor by email *Parity*@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6201

Referencing

NB: Due to space considerations, contributors are encouraged to use endnotes when referencing their *Parity* articles. All works that are cited or referred to in an article should be referenced.

The *Parity* referencing protocol is very simple. All references cited in the article should be referenced by:

Author(s); surname, initial(s), **Date (**of publication), **Title**, **Publisher** (for journals, volume and Issue number), **Location, Page**(s)

For example:
1. Seung S 2012, Connectome: How the Brain's Wiring Makes Us Who We Are, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, Boston, P.90.
 2. Trevithick P 2003 'Effective Relationship Based Practice', *Journal Of Social Work Practice*, vol.17, no.2, pp.163-176.

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http://chp.org.au/services/*Parity*-magazine/contribute-to-*Parity*/

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Assistance
Feedback, input and assistance can be provided with drafts if required. If prospective contributors have any questions at all they should contact the *Parity* Editor, *Parity*@chp.org.au or ring 03 8415 6200 or 03 8415 6201.