

Resident perceptions of intensification: Western City and the transformation of local government

The aim of the project was to provide insights to better balance the potential for urban growth while maintaining neighbourhood amenities and resident satisfaction in the suburban town centre of Liverpool, Sydney, Australia. We analysed the everyday experiences of living in apartments and consumer demand and market supply of multi-unit dwellings in a densifying neighbourhood.

Why the study:

- While the dominant planning and development discourse regards apartments as the domain of singles and couples without children, an increasing number of families with children now live in apartments.
- There is a concentration of one- and two-bedroom apartments in Liverpool, which has raised concerns about the potential mismatch between investor-driven supply and consumer demand.
- Understanding the misalignment between resident demand and investor-driven supply of multi-unit housing helps address shortfalls of specific dwelling types and sizes.



What we did:

- A pilot study with apartment residents: Utilising interviews, and home and neighbourhood tours, we invited participants to share with us their preferences and everyday experiences of living in apartments in a densifying neighbourhood (demand).
- A quantitative analysis of existing occupancy patterns of apartments by household type, apartment size (by bedroom) and dwelling approvals in the same neighbourhood (supply).

What we found:

- Liverpool is emblematic of a trend where an increasing number of families with children now live in apartments, with 50.3% of the apartment stock occupied by couples or single parents with children.
- Recognising the significance of multi-unit dwellings in housing supply, the market-led supply creates a mismatch between housing need and type, as housing careers move beyond detached homes towards spacious apartments in suburban town centres.

What this means:

- This new knowledge of local context is beneficial for land use planning policies in accounting for local demand and supply variations in multiunit dwellings.
- Calibrating the share of larger apartments in Local Government Development Control Plans with consumer demand will improve housing outcomes in densifying suburbs.

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