

Greg Ogle - Housing Policy and Challenges

Key points - presentation to WACRA GM 5 September 2024

Introduction

- Greg Ogle has 14 years experience with SACOSS (South Australian Council of Social Service).
- Core mission: End poverty in the bigger picture.
- Focus on housing context and trajectory.

Housing Context

- Data from 2021 census.
- Comparison of housing mix by tenure in coastal strips and broader Adelaide.
- Coastal areas have more outright homeowners, less public and community housing.

Historical Housing Data

- Charles Sturt Council area compared with 20 years ago.
- Increase in mortgage payments, fewer people owning homes outright.
- Decrease in social housing availability.

Housing Cost Changes

- Trends in mortgage interest payments and general inflation.
- Post-GFC drop in interest rates, recent spikes.
- Rental market complexity due to data including social housing.
- Impact of media on rental price perceptions.

Focus on Social Housing

- Reasons for emphasis on public housing:
 - Direct market intervention.
 - Provides societal benefits beyond welfare.
- Decline in social housing availability over decades.

Public Policy Response

- SACOS video to highlight housing issues.
- Critique of previous government housing plans.
- Lack of commitment to new public housing under older policies.

Recent Positive Developments

- Labor government promises to build new public housing.
- Federal initiatives to increase housing supply.
- Local examples like Seaton - significant increase in housing supply.

Challenges and Future Needs

- New housing barely matches population growth.
- Historical perspective: More housing built in the past.
- Current project plans by state government to increase housing supply have challenges.

Renters' Rights

- Reforms in Residential Tenancies Act.
- Ending no-fault evictions.
- Challenges such as rent control and energy efficiency standards not fully addressed.

Additional Policy Changes

- Cost of living concessions for renters.
- New land releases and planning system reforms.
- Energy upgrades for social housing.

Long-term Solutions and Considerations

- Economists' views on policy supports:
 - Ending tax benefits for investors.
 - Increasing public housing seen as crucial.
- SACOSS supports changes like annual land tax and vacancy taxes.

Going forward

- Continue advocacy for more public housing.
- Explore local impacts of short stay rentals.
- Recognise ongoing housing crisis despite policy advances.