

RMIT University

GPO Box 2476
Melbourne VIC 3001
Australiarmit.edu.au

Specialist Housing Indicators Project

In 2022/2023 The [Australian Urban Observatory](#) team and Professor Jago Dodson from the [Centre for Urban Research](#) partnered with the [Innovation Catalyst](#), in the [Policy, Strategy and Impact portfolio](#) at RMIT University, to develop and pilot **specialist housing indicators** that address current critical housing issues.

The development of these specialist housing indicators is part of a portfolio of Inclusive Innovation, being led by RMIT University's Innovation Catalyst, demonstrating the collaborative potential of a social innovation precinct to advance key aspects of future social and economic wellbeing. This portfolio is supported by [RMIT University](#)'s partnership with the Victorian Government as part of the Victorian Government's Higher Education State Investment Fund (VHESIF). In June 2021 the Victorian Government announced a [\\$44.6million investment](#) focused on RMIT's City North campus and opportunities for urban renewal. This funding to Victorian universities was designed to boost Victoria's productivity and economy, as the state and the university sector, recovered from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. The [Australian Urban Observatory](#) gratefully acknowledges all support and partnership provided for the project.

The primary aim of the specialist housing indicators project was to develop new housing indicators that directly address the current and critical housing issues of relevance to public policy and decision-making across Australia. A secondary aim was to pilot and demonstrate the value of small area spatial analysis, measurement and mapping of critical housing issues to help inform service planning, advocacy and policy intervention. Where possible, new specialist housing indicators were developed for all [21 cities](#) included in the [Australian Urban Observatory](#) to be consistent with existing liveability indicators. This includes all 8 capital cities and the 13 largest regional cities of Australia including Albury-Wodonga, Newcastle-Maitland, Wollongong, Cairns, Gold Coast-Tweed Heads, Mackay, Sunshine Coast, Toowoomba, Townsville, Launceston, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong.

Another goal of the project was to **develop new specialist housing indicators at the smallest level of geography available**, dependent on data access and availability. All existing liveability indicators included in the [Australian Urban Observatory](#) are available for Local Government Areas (LGAs), suburbs and neighbourhoods so the new specialist housing indicators were developed at their smallest geographies for all 21 cities to reveal area inequities (where possible). Raw data were analysed to produce the easy to understand and mapped final specialist housing indicators. However, data access according to smallest geography was limited for some new specialist housing indicators with data custodians restricting data access (homeless service indicators), data only correspondent to LGAs (building approvals, demolitions and rental costs) only available for Victoria (rental costs and property prices and only for neighbourhood and suburbs). Changes in the [Australian Statistical Geography Standard](#) and boundary movement between the 2016 and 2021 Census also created complexities. Consequently, the innovative Precarity Index for Neighbourhood and City Housing (PINCH) that is constructed from data across both time periods is only mapped for suburbs.

2023 Specialist Housing Indicators included in the Australian Urban Observatory

1.	Precarity Index for Neighbourhood and City Housing (PINCH) (LGA and suburbs)*
2.	Location of people 1 week before entering a homeless service (selected suburbs and LGAs only) **
3.	Average distance travelled by a person to a homeless service (selected LGAs only) **
4.	VAMPIRE Index (Vulnerability Assessment for Mortgage, Petroleum, Inflation Risks and Expenditure)***
5.	Key Worker Index (residential)****
6.	Key Worker Index Public Sector Occupations (residential)†
7.	Key Worker Index Service Sector Occupations (residential)‡
8.	Key Worker Index (workplace, LGA only)****
9.	Key Worker Index Public Sector Occupations (workplace, LGA only)†
10.	Key Worker Index Service Sector Occupations (workplace, LGA only)‡
11.	Housing properties owned outright
12.	Housing properties with a mortgage
13.	Housing properties rented from a real estate agency
14.	Housing properties rented from a state or territory housing authority
15.	Housing properties rented from a community, cooperative or church
16.	Annual count of housing building approvals (total dwellings LGA only)
17.	Annual count of housing demolitions (total dwellings LGA only)
18.	Median annual property price (Victoria only, neighbourhood and suburb)
19.	Median annual property price houses (Victoria only, neighbourhood and suburb)
20.	Median annual property price units (Victoria only, neighbourhood and suburb)
21.	Median annual rental costs for all housing (Victoria only, LGA)
22.	Median annual rental costs for houses (Victoria only, LGA)
23.	Median annual rental costs for units (Victoria only, LGA)
24.	Percentage of housing with affordable rental costs (Victoria only, LGA)

*The Precarity Index for Neighbourhood City and Housing (PINCH) is based on 8 outcomes categories: low-income/susceptible to displacement; ongoing displacement of low-income households; at risk of gentrification; early ongoing gentrification; stable moderate/mixed income; at risk of becoming exclusive; becoming exclusive; stable/advanced exclusive.

**Collated and purchased from the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) and derived from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection when a client receives a Specialist Homelessness Service. This includes information on the postcode where a client resided in the week before entering a service. The AIHW suppressed values for any suburbs or results that raised privacy concerns.

***More information on the Vulnerability Assessment for Mortgage, Petroleum, Inflation Risks and Expenditure (VAMPIRE) is available [here](#).

****The Key Worker Index is created based on 4 digit occupation types from the Australian and New Zealand Standard Classification of Occupations (ANZSCO). Key worker data can be collected at an individual's home/residential location or their place of work and should be considered with the proportion of people living and working locally and distance travelled to work. The Key Worker Index (residential) is based on the worker's place of residence. The Key Worker Index (workplace) is based on the worker's place of work and only available at the LGA.

† Public sector occupations include teachers, nurses, social workers, fire and emergency workers, police, paramedics, prison officers, welfare workers, carers and aides.

‡ Service sector occupations include hospitality workers and managers and workers at cafes, restaurants, motels, hotels and clubs, chefs and cooks, bar attendants, baristas, café workers, waiters, laundry workers and cleaners.

The majority of the specialist housing indicators listed above are produced with data sourced from the [Australian Bureau of Statistics](#) demonstrating the value of national statistics agencies. The exceptions to this are: the homeless service indicators collated by AIHW from the Specialist Homelessness Services Collection; property price for Victorian locations from Australian Property Monitors previously available via [AURIN](#); and rental costs from the [Victorian Department of Families Fairness and Housing](#). The method used to develop the Precarity Index for Neighbourhood and City Housing (PINCH) will be released later in 2023 in a forthcoming academic publication.

The project arose from cross-disciplinary collaboration with **Dr David Kelly** and **Professor Libby Porter** with expertise in housing justice, gentrification and displacement and co-located at the Centre for Urban Research. Thanks to Melbourne Homelessness Network Coordinators **Sarah Langmore** (Wombat Housing) and **Meredith Gorman** (Launch Housing) for sharing their practice-based experiences which guided development of the homeless service indicators. Thanks also go to a range of stakeholders who actively participated in a workshop in August 2022 to identify priority housing issues that required easily accessible evidence and new housing indicators.

To start exploring the results of this **specialist housing indicators** project head to the [Australian Urban Observatory](#) [auo.org.au](#), log in, and start learning more about the current state of housing across the neighbourhoods, suburbs and cities of Australia.

About the Australian Urban Observatory at RMIT

The [Australian Urban Observatory](#) is a ground-breaking digital liveability platform that transforms complex data into easily understood mapped liveability indicators that measure and monitor liveability across Australia's largest cities. The AUO has been designed to make research accessible to policy and planning decision-makers and help with prioritising future actions to enhance liveability in the areas that need it most. The AUO understanding of [liveability](#) links [urban policy and planning to the social determinants of health](#) with local lived environments explaining up to [55% of long-term health outcomes](#).

About Policy Strategy and Impact at RMIT

The [Policy, Strategy and Impact](#) portfolio supports the Vice-chancellor at RMIT University and includes a diverse set of teams doing high-impact work aligned with RMIT's 2031 Strategy: Knowledge with Action. The portfolio focuses on building collaborative ecosystems to develop and deliver impactful research, addressing shared challenges and creating benefit for society and the environment.

About the Centre for Urban Research at RMIT

The [RMIT Centre for Urban Research](#) is directly responding to the globally important need to shape cities that are environmentally, socially and economically sustainable. We are a thriving interdisciplinary research centre focused on policy-relevant, high impact, research excellence in the fields related to urban planning.