

Chaffey's College Land Rent an Affordability Alternative *by Louise Ackland*



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Prepared by: This is a private submission, not part of a campaign.

Housing and the concept of 'home' is crucial to any discussion about the health and wellbeing of any citizen. It is central to how our society operates and formative in shaping our experiences in this country. It encompasses all of our notions of security; safety; belonging and heritage and our dreams and visions for our future. And increasingly this is an unattainable quest for a whole new generation, unless they are prepared to suspend all reason and saddle themselves with insane levels of debt.

This can't [end] well. Our whole economy is underpinned by a debt filled illusion of prosperity. As someone who lives in an inland regional town I am amazed that more people don't recognise the potential of decentralisation. How can we make housing more affordable without crashing the bubble?

Terms of Reference C: Examine the effectiveness of initiatives to improve housing supply in other jurisdictions and their appropriateness in an Australian context.

Many years ago my husband and I had some business in north Adelaide but struggled to find any accommodation, so ended up having to book a cabin at a caravan park in Gawler. The park was made up of three sections, one for vans, one for on-site cabins and one for permanent homes under a land-lease model.

Strolling around this section we were struck by how nice some of the houses were, how beautifully the gardens were kept and were impressed by the amenities available. We wondered to ourselves why this opportunity was only available to the over 55's?

I find this concept intriguing as an opportunity to address housing affordability in Australia. The demand for this model is obvious by the number of retirement villages popping up everywhere and advertising heavily in weekend papers. There's no denying the popularity, look at the example of Sun City Arizona.¹

¹ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sun_City,_Arizona

All of these villages boast a golf course; a swimming pool; recreation centre; visiting doctors clinic; hairdresser etc. Exactly the same amenities every regional town has already.

The town of Mildura is unique in terms of its College Lease Land scheme which might be adopted and modified as an option for providing affordable housing that could attract new settlement away from the cities and provide the much needed workforce in some regions or help to stem the trend of young people leaving and taking all of their talent and energy with them.

Every week we hear a new call for assistance to our 'most vulnerable' and every week that list seems to grow. Providing free housing to rent-seeking parasites is not something anyone should support but certainly an argument exists for some kind of social housing and definitely cheaper mainstream housing especially for young people.

The problem with social housing projects is the tendency for them to turn into ghettos of poverty; crime; violence and total lack of respect from the occupants to look after the asset. This is the profence of town planners and designers to address.

Case Study – Mildura

"The Chaffey brothers wanted to make Mildura a vibrant community. Their plans included many visionary concepts: an agricultural college was needed and to finance this they allocated one-fifteenth of the land to be for College leases, which has provided support funding for schools over many years.

Prominent locations were made available for churches and facilities for clubs were encouraged. Parks and town transport were considered – together this gave us the beautiful centre plantation of Deakin Avenue, surely one of the finest thoroughfares in Australia. Lanes and streets were laid out in all the town planning making Mildura the beautiful place it is".²

2 <http://esvc000627.wic062u.server-web.com/asp/>

I wonder if this concept is an opportunity, if modified and taken to a much larger scale, for making housing cheaper without government being saddled with ongoing problems of maintenance of the housing stock.

Rather, provide the land and collect the lease payments which could then be used to finance some of the other critical services that are the responsibility of Government?

The vision of the agriculture school the Chaffey's wished to build for Mildura didn't eventuate but look what they did in San Bernardino County.³⁻

More than one hundred years later, the ongoing benefit that the College Lease Land model provides for the schools of Sunraysia is evidenced in these extracts from two of the region's school newsletters (see next page).^{4 5}

More handouts and stimulus in the form of First Home Buyer grants are simply vote buying, flagrant and incurious programs to stimulate the economy through housing which merely results in pushing the price up and exacerbating the problem further. Maybe its time to look outside the box and reimagine purpose-built projects which are well designed, incorporate renewable options to make living costs lower and have transport links to avoid the need for so many cars. Areas which allow for community and connection that is so lacking in sprawling suburbs. Instead of spending money to build freeways to accommodate all this sprawl, investment to encourage settlement in the regions has many associated benefits.

Far more desirable than the visions proposed in Agenda 2030 surely.

Submission - www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/House/Tax_and_Revenue/Housingaffordability/Submissions

[documents/milduraschaffeytrail_brox09.pdf](#)

3 <https://sbcsentinel.com/2017/08/chaffey-college/>

4 <http://www.merbeinp10.vic.edu.au/images/Newsletters/2018T3/2018T3week10.pdf>

5 http://www.redcliffsps.vic.edu.au/rcps_files/Newsletter/June22nd2016.pdf