



City Futures Research Centre

New to Australia? Good luck!

Affordability barriers to migrant settlement in Australia's 'gateway suburbs'

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Based on a paper by Hazel Easthope, Wendy Stone & Lynda Cheshire*

- Official statistics > many areas of concentrated disadvantage have high proportions of migrants
- Academic line > concentrations of disadvantaged people is bad

SEIFA 2011

Main Page

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas

Relative measures of socio-economic disadvantage and advantage by geographic areas



- But it's more nuanced than that!
- Gateway suburbs are important for migrant communities
.... But they are under threat
- How can we future-proof?



“A lot of people come straight from the airport to Auburn”

[Auburn, NGO worker/support provider]



Image source: Auburn - J Bar; Springvale - Orderinchaos



Auburn & Springvale

- unemployment **11%**
- residents in **low-skilled / low-status jobs** **46-57%**
- households with **weekly incomes less than \$600** **22-26%**
- people **living in private rental housing** **31-33%**
- low-income households **paying > 30% income in rent (Auburn)** **33%**

“ Many new arrivals experience multiple disadvantage including poverty, housing stress, previous experiences of trauma, interrupted education experiences, health problems, disability and unemployment which require additional resources to target their complexities of need.”

(Auburn City Council 2013:21)

Not disadvantaged places



Migrant gateway suburbs

Many migrants settle near existing communities with ethnic services, social support networks & lower-cost housing

(Edgar 2014, Johnston et al. 2001)

Auburn

There's a strong sense of community in this neighbourhood **66%**

I feel I belong to this neighbourhood **65%**

There is a good mix of people here **88%**

I have attended a local event in the last 6 months **46%**

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Private sector housing

[The housing market is] characterised by high and growing levels of private rental and higher density housing, suggesting rapid change in which investor landlord activity has been a key housing market driver

(Hulse et al. 2014:4).

Private rental

- ✓ Marginal rental sector
- ✓ Sharing / overcrowding
- ✓ Poor quality housing
- ✓ Housing stress



Private rental

“Rental stock is in bad dis-repair. Refugees/recent arrivals go into these houses. Real estate agents slow to act on people living in sub-standard conditions.” [Springvale, community NGO community worker]

“There’s a lot of overcrowding in Auburn.” [Auburn, NGO community worker]

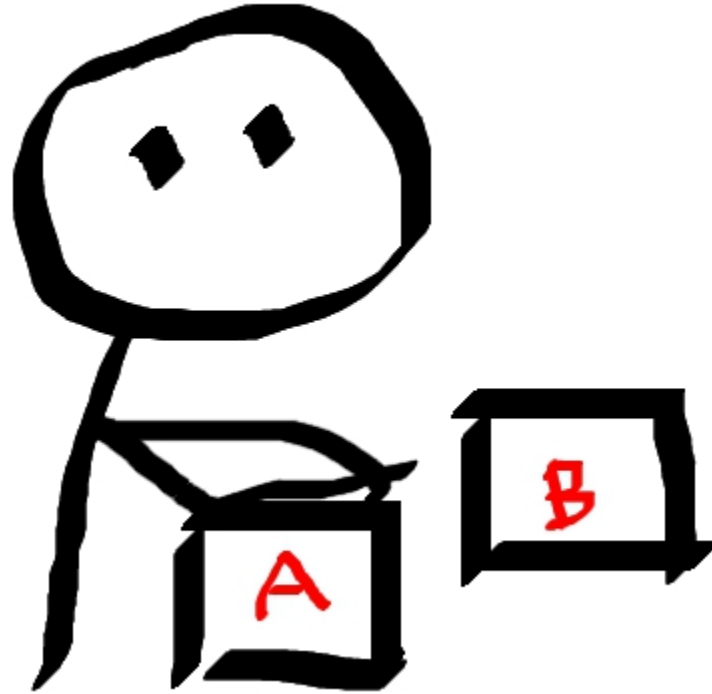
“It was a bit of a magnet for those on restricted incomes, it's not so affordable any more. This has implications for new arrivals who want to join in with a culturally diverse community.” [Springvale, community NGO community worker]

The 'choice'

.... between living in
overcrowded and/or
substandard conditions

or

moving to a more affordable
area with fewer facilities and
support services.



Source: Obsidian soul

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Gateway to what?



What to do?

“The contribution of refugees to their new homes worldwide has been overwhelmingly positive”

(Filippo Grandi, UN High Commissioner for Refugees, 28 January 2017)

1. Keep pushing for recognition of the importance of migrants (and not just wealthy ones) for Australian society
2. Support existing & new gateway suburbs & associated services (e.g. in Blacktown!)
3. Future proof housing affordability & quality so this process doesn't happen again

Future proof the housing system

Local governments need to regulate & make the most of land value uplift ...




Take away message

Gateway suburbs are important.

We must ...

- support those we have &
 - help develop new ones that will last
- ... through local interventions in housing & service provision



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Easthope, H., Stone, W. & Cheshire, L. (2017) "The decline of 'advantageous disadvantage' in gateway suburbs in Australia: The challenge of private housing market settlement for newly arrived migrants", Urban Studies, DOI: 10.1177/0042098017700791