

**AFFORDABILITY NEED:** University of South Australia PhD scholar Jessica Porter recently addressed the focused need for affordable housing in non-metropolitan Australia to over 300 local government mayors, elected members and professionals from across Australia.



# Study highlights need for affordable housing

Planning officer's research to help guide state's regional future

NEW research shows access to affordable housing in regional South Australia has not improved in recent years, with a South East study specialist highlighting the need to action change.

University of South Australia PhD scholar Jessica Porter recently presented her findings to the Regional Co-operation and Development Forum at Canberra's Australian Local Government Association National General Assembly.

Ms Porter addressed whether there was an affordable housing crisis in non-metropolitan Australia to over 300 local government mayors, elected members and professionals from across Australia at the forum.

Working as a planning officer for Mount Gambier City Council, Ms Porter said housing affordability affects regional centres just as much as capital cities.

"There are many common themes facing regional areas

across Australia such as ageing populations, ageing housing stock, lack of housing stock and overcrowding," she said.

"For example, a large portion of the Limestone Coast relies on seasonal workers and there is currently a lack of housing for these types of employees.

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JESSICA PORTER  
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AUSTRALIA  
PHD SCHOLAR

"In some areas of Australia, local government is the only physical form of government present in the community and it is imperative they become housing leaders - this is particularly important in regional and rural

areas where attention from state and federal government can be limited."

While developing her expertise during her PhD study, Ms Porter has worked with the Australian Research Council Linkage project team exploring the future of local government

and housing in 21st century Australia.

The project aims to address issues including housing affordability, decreased home ownership and pockets of poverty and disadvantage in the

private rental sector.

UniSA regional manager Ian McKay is thrilled with Ms Porter's work.

"Our local PhD scholars are making a significant impact by addressing real-world issues for our local community and the nation," he said.

"Jessica is an expert in her field and we are privileged to have her world-class expertise available locally."

Ms Porter said she looked forward to seeing what her future impact on regional Australia may be.

"I am enjoying my PhD research and feel incredibly fortunate to have been able to combine my experience in local government with my interest in regional/rural Australia," she said.

"Moving forward, I am hopeful that my research will have significant impact on the provision of affordable housing in regional Australia."