HOUSING SOLUTIONS FOR FOOTSCRAY

The projected housing pipeline in Footscray involves building thousands of small investor-owned apartments, the death of public housing, a growing private rental market, and rising rents.

This Dinner Conversation will explore:

- vacant land, vacant housing and the supply myth
- urban reform / renewal programs (Braybrook, Gaskin Gardens, Activity Centres)
- crisis accommodation, support systems, policing of the west

David Kelly (Centre for Urban Research)
Sandra Geitz (public housing advocate)
Taylah (Renters & Housing Union RAHU)

Thursday July 9
6.30pm @Borderlands
People's Plan for Footscray
Dinner Conversations
Tickets required

peoplesplanfootscray.net

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN

Footscray has been especially affected by market driven trends and government policies that have massively decreased housing affordability and increased displacement, breaking up communities and increasing hardship and inequity.

The increasing gentrification of Footscray has eroded the social fabric, creating class and cultural antagonisms, decreasing community connectedness and increasing exclusion. These trends will be exacerbated by plans to significantly increase Footscray's population over the next 25 years. The availability of low cost housing, retail and services has been replaced by land banking, and short–term fixes that substitute for people-driven urban planning.

The People's Plan for Footscray will develop a platform and practice to advocate for and help activate democratisation in public decision making, and build community capacity and institutions that will sustain popular power.

COMMUNITY YARNS

The People's Plan for Footscray is helping organise small-group conversations that bring together people who see themselves as part of a community within Footscray — whether that's a school community, a street or apartment block, a cultural group, a social club, a faith community, a sports team, or a group of friends. These Community Yarns are aimed at helping surface and share local knowledge, opinions and aspirations. Anyone connected to Footscray is invited. To host a Community Yarn contact: Terri@borderlandscooperative.net

The people's Plan for Footscray

bringing people back into public decision-making

organised communities working together to build public power and make change ...

The People's Plan for Footscray

THE PEOPLE'S PLAN FOR FOOTSCRAY

In March 2026, forty community workers, advocates and activists participated in the first People's Plan for Footscray Community Mapping Exercise. This included people from over twenty different community organisations working in Footscray. The mapping highlighted some important understandings and perspectives about Footscray.

Participants spent three hours in table groups discussing:

- **What's changed in Footscray over the last 5 and more years?**
- **What worries you most about the future for Footscray?**
- **What excites you most about the future for Footscray?**
- **What community assets and social infrastructure do we have and value in Footscray?**
- **What are the equity and environmental issues, and social needs in the area?**
- **What are the potential opportunities for community action?**
- **Are there clusters of issues? Are there obvious campaign 'sites'?**
- **How do we engage community members who don't normally engage, to develop a 'People's Plan'?**
- **What practical tasks can we work on together to bring people into the process?**

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COMMUNITY SURVEY

Share your thoughts, concerns and hopes for Footscray in the future.

WHAT'S CHANGED

- Footscray is becoming more polarised: wealthier incomers and more precarious residents share space but not experiences.
- Housing pressures and land banking are eroding equity and trust in planning.
- Local vibrancy is declining due to business closures, cost of living pressures, and post-Covid social withdrawal.
- Social stress and stigma are rising, affecting the most marginalised.
- Governance feels uncertain, with reduced services and a sense of disconnection between Council and community.
- Yet there are green shoots: better transport, youth energy, cultural anchors, and a continued sense of belonging among former residents.

FEARS FOR THE FUTURE

The overarching worries about Footscray were:

- Being priced out and pushed out by gentrification.
- Losing the multicultural, open, working-class soul of the suburb.
- Becoming a surveilled, unequal place defined by fear and exclusion.
- Government handing control to developers while community needs go unmet.
- Deepening crisis in mental health, homelessness and basic wellbeing.
- Loss of community spaces, services and shared life.
- Disconnection: people don't know what's going on or how to get involved.

WHAT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL HOPEFUL

Across all themes, the sources of excitement are:

- The energy and creativity of young people.
- A strong culture of care, solidarity, and multicultural pride.
- Powerful First Nations history and growing visibility.
- Major physical assets that could be reclaimed by the community.
- A collaborative civic 'ecosystem' eager to try new models.
- Pride in local schools.
- A belief that Footscray is full of possibility—if 'community voice' leads.

FOOTSCRAY'S ASSETS

Across the discussions, Footscray's identified assets fell into six categories:

- Physical infrastructure & public spaces (market, station, parks, river, libraries).
- Community organisations & social infrastructure (Neighbourhood Houses, arts, cultural groups, grassroots collectives).
- People, culture & community energy (youth, multiculturalism, activism, neighbourliness).
- Small businesses & economic life (local traders, food culture, creative enterprises).
- Educational & cultural institutions (VU, schools, libraries, arts places).
- Unlockable, high-potential sites (old hospital, Little Saigon, Forges, the Mall etc.).

WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

The People's Plan for Footscray

Footscray's opportunities lie in:

- **Activating under-used spaces for community, green, and cultural purposes.**
- **Harnessing youth and community energy to co-design programs.**
- **Fostering inclusive, multicultural spaces.**
- **A focus on affordable housing and social justice initiatives.**
- **Strengthening democratic participation, civic engagement, and involvement in planning.**

BRINGING PEOPLE BACK INTO PUBLIC DECISION-MAKING