

Unpacking the disconnect of sustainability upgrades between tenants, private landlords and real estate agents.

Kick off meeting

12/03/2025

RMIT research team:

Trivess Moore

Sarah Robertson

Alan Pears

Ashleigh Stokes



Agenda

Item	Who	Time
Welcome & Acknowledgment of Country	Trivess Moore & Sarah Robertson	5 minutes
Introductions	All	20 minutes
Project overview and updates	Trivess Moore	10 minutes
Next steps and feedback	Trivess Moore and Sarah Robertson	15 minutes
Any other business	All	5 minutes





Acknowledgement of Country

RMIT University acknowledges the people of the Woi wurrung and Boon wurrung language groups of the eastern Kulin Nation on whose unceded lands we conduct the business of the University.

RMIT University respectfully acknowledges their Ancestors and Elders, past and present.

RMIT also acknowledges the Traditional Custodians and their Ancestors of the lands and waters across Australia where we conduct our business.

Artwork 'Sentient' by Hollie Johnson

Hollie is a Gunaikurnai and Monero Ngarigo woman from Gippsland who graduated from RMIT with a BA in Photography in 2016.

Partners

Funding and in-kind partners:

- Bank Australia,
- Energy Consumers Australia,
- Merri-bek City Council,
- Yarra City Council,
- Darebin City Council,
- Whittlesea City Council,
- City of Newcastle,
- Energy Efficiency & Electrification Alliance.

In-kind partners

- Department of Energy, Environment & Climate Action (VIC),
- Department of Climate Change Energy Environment & Water (NSW),
- University of Technology Sydney,
- WeldonCO,
- City of Banyule,
- Energy Efficiency Council,
- City of Moonee Valley,
- Shire of Nillumbik,
- Hume City Council,
- Century 21,
- Solar Victoria.



Introductions

Brief introduction:

- Name
- Who you work for



Status

- Contract in process of signing.
- Formal kick off late March.
- Set up of project underway.



What are the research aims?



Understand the disconnect between landlords, tenants and real estate agents.



Explore if and how the provision of trusted and independent energy performance and retrofit information can influence landlords' decisions to undertake energy upgrades.



Explore the role of real estate agents and tenants as key intermediaries for supporting and guiding private rental upgrades.



Work packages

WP1 – Participant recruitment

- Recruitment of landlords (n=50-60), tenants (n=50-60) and real estate agents (n=20-25).

WP2 – Baseline interviews round 1

- Semi-structured interviews with landlords and tenants to collect baseline data.
- Semi-structured interviews with real estate agents.

WP3 – HER assessment

- Scorecard assessments to be conducted by accredited professionals on participating private rental dwellings.

WP4 – Participant interviews round 2

- ~ 6 months after a HER assessment a second-round interview will be conducted with landlords and tenants.



Work packages

WP5 – General survey and focus groups

- Online survey of landlords, tenants and real estate agents across participating states to validate outcomes.
- 3 focus groups involving stakeholders representing tenants, landlords and real estate agents to discuss findings and recommendations for policy and practice.

WP6 – Analysis and final report

Stage 2 (not yet funded):

Retrofits and performance data collection

- Retrofits of small-medium scale will be undertaken for some private rental dwellings to test if the provision of some retrofit prompts further retrofit to occur.
- Before and after performance data (e.g., energy bills, thermal performance) will be collected and analysed to explore the impacts of any retrofit activities.



Timeline

Work packag	Activities	2025										2026								
		Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
1	Project establishment & recruitment of RA																			
	Develop Interview and survey questions																			
	Confirm household recruitment strategy																			
	Ethics submission and approval																			
	Undertake household recruitment																			
	IRG 1																			
2	Round 1 interviews																			
	Interim report (Milestone report 1)																			
	IRG 2																			
	Finalise survey																			
3	Scorecard assessments																			
	Interim report (Milestone report 2)																			
	IRG 3																			
4	Update interview questions for round 2 interviews																			
	Round 2 interviews																			
	Interim report (Milestone report 3)																			
	IRG 4																			
5	Survey distribution																			
	Analysis of survey results (Milestone 4 report)																			
	Focus groups																			
	Analysis of focus group outcomes (Milestone 4 report)																			
	IRG 5																			
	Complete retrofits (not yet funded)																			
	Round 2 interviews (retrofit houses)																			
	Interim report (Milestone 4 report)																			
	IRG (aligned with IRG 5)																			
6	Draft final project report																			
	IRG 6																			
	Final report																			



Expected outcomes and impact

- Inform policy development around retrofit, private rental, mandatory disclosure.
- Implications for education, training and information for key stakeholders.
- Reduced energy consumption and bills.
- Reduced greenhouse gas emissions.
- Estimated savings per household of \$1,845/yr or \$500 million/yr by 2035 across Victorian private rental sector



Expansion into NSW

- City of Newcastle is now involved.
- Talking with other local councils in NSW.
- Extend research into NSW homes and real estate agents.
- Potential to bring on NSW based university to support.





Next steps

- Finalise contracts
- RACE announcement of project, partners to share announcement
- Formal start to research
- RMIT ethics approval (underway)
- Collect in-kind data/information from partners
- Refine recruitment process and interview questions





Participant recruitment

- Geographic focus on contributing local council areas (priority)

Renters/landlords:

- RMIT and project partners social media, newsletters, networks
- Letter boxing
- Snowballing
- Real estate agents
- Wider industry stakeholders

Real estate agents

- Snowballing
- RMIT and project partners contacts/networks
- Business search





Interview questions - households

- ~60 minute interviews. Online or face to face.
- Broad topic areas:
 - Context of current dwelling: *type, location, affordability, use*
 - Performance and quality: *thermal comfort, heating & cooling appliances, energy & water use/bills*
 - Relationship with landlord/real estate agent
 - Requesting and making changes: *comfort in requesting changes, lived experience of requests for change, specific sustainability requests, outcomes, assessment tools*
 - Demographic information





Interview questions - landlords

- ~60 minute interviews. Online or face to face.
- Broad topic areas:
 - Context of where they live: *type, location, affordability, use*
 - Performance and quality of where they live: *thermal comfort, heating & cooling appliances, energy & water use/bills*
 - Context of rental property(ies): *type, location, affordability*
 - Performance and quality of rental property(ies): *thermal comfort, heating & cooling appliances, energy & water use/bills*
 - Relationship with tenant/real estate agent
 - Making changes: *comfort in tenants requesting changes, lived experience of requests for change, specific sustainability requests, outcomes, assessment tools, minimum rental standards*
 - Demographic information





Interview questions – real estate agents

- ~30-45 minutes. Online or face to face.
- Broad topic areas:
 - Real estate industry experience
 - Current portfolios
 - Services provided
 - Relationships with landlords/tenants
 - Process of maintenance and improvement
 - Requests for sustainability improvements
 - Minimum rental standards, potential future changes
 - Rating tools



Any other business?



Next meeting

- IRG meeting #1 May – date and time TBC

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