

A Fresh Approach to Building Your Student Visa Approvals Through Homestay Partnering








David Bycroft
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International Education in Australia





-  Range of student visa changes since Dec 2023
-  Record number of international students in Australia
(793,335 Jan-Jul 2024)
-  Government has introduced international student caps
- Concerns around appropriate and compliant delivery of education
-  International students partly blamed for housing crisis
-  New uncertainty for students and agents RE: Australia

Current Challenges – Student Housing

-  Availability and affordability of share housing / rentals
-  Low PBSA supply and long build time for new properties
-  On-campus housing is at capacity or doesn't meet needs
-  Overcrowding, exploitation and price gouging
-  Increases in day-to-day cost of living
 - International students and Australian households

The Potential Solution

There is an opportunity to immediately increase accommodation stocks for international students which will:

-  Take the pressure off the rental crisis
-  Decrease household cost of living stress
-  Grow student visa approvals
-  Protect jobs and the economy in international education

THERE ARE **13 MILLION**
SPARE BEDROOMS
IN HOMES ACROSS AUSTRALIA




SOURCE: [*Are there 1 million empty homes and 13 million unused bedrooms?*](#)
Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (13 September 2022)

The Queensland University of Technology suggests a shift in the housing debate from:

🏠 new supply to better utilisation of existing housing and

🏠 incentivising older homeowners to rent out spare bedrooms.

SOURCE: [The role of older Australians in addressing the housing crisis: spare bedrooms, taxation, and the pension](https://doi.org/10.5204/book.eprints.251974)
Lyndall Bryant, QUT Centre for Justice Briefing Papers (September 2024 / Issue 60)



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Editorial Introduction

Census data indicates there may be as many as 13 million spare bedrooms in existing Australian homes, at a time when rental stress, homelessness and the cost of living are all at crisis point. This paper proposes a novel approach to the housing debate, identifying older homeowners and their empty bedrooms as a potential immediate boost to affordable rental supply. By examining existing tax and pension arrangements in relation to rental income, this paper suggests policy measures that may incentivise older Australians to take in a lodger, thus providing much needed affordable rental stock whilst assisting with their cost of living.

About the Author

Dr Lyndall Bryant is a Senior Lecturer and researcher at QUT's Business and Law Faculty, specialising in Property Economics. She is the founder and Chair of the QUT Housing Security Research Group.

The role of older Australians in addressing the housing crisis: spare bedrooms, taxation, and the pension

<https://doi.org/10.5204/book.eprints.251974>

Lyndall Bryant

Background

The Australian housing crisis and its societal impacts are well documented. Housing affordability is at its worst level on record and is not forecast to improve before 2029 (National Housing Supply and Affordability Council, 2024). Strong demand in the rental sector is being fuelled by post-COVID population growth of 651,000 persons in 2023, combined with shrinking capacity in housing supply evidenced by falling building approvals (ABS, 2024) and increasing construction company insolvencies. Homelessness services are experiencing a "tsunami of homelessness" as tenants are priced out of the rental market (Homelessness Australia, 2024). New data on the state of the housing crisis emerges almost daily. By the time this article is published, not only will the statistics be out of date, the situation will have deteriorated.

In an attempt to boost housing supply, governments at all levels have committed billions of dollars to fund new housing, particularly in social and affordable housing. However, new housing supply has long lead times, which means any potential relief is years away. The government's own *State of the Housing System* report has forecast demand for housing to outstrip supply in Australia until at least 2029 (the limit of its forecast horizon) (National Housing Supply and Affordability Council, 2024). Relief from the housing crisis is not in sight.

This paper suggests a shift in the housing debate from new supply to better utilisation of existing housing, by incentivising older homeowners to increase rental stock through renting out spare bedrooms. In doing so, this paper adopts a pragmatic, knowledge translation lens to rental income and suggests a reframing of existing taxation policy. A changed understanding of rental income, together with minor changes to tax and social security settings is suggested to achieve immediate access to affordable housing and cost of living relief to vulnerable Australians. Whilst suggested policy changes may be minimal, accompanying initiatives are needed to ensure success, including education on complex tax/social security settings; tenancy matching and management services; and supports for potential diminishing business acumen and mental capacity, and potential elder abuse.

Right Move, Right Time, Right Direction



Properly-managed hosted (homestay) accommodation is set to become a major marketing differentiator for Australia



Government supported and industry-recognised NEAS Homestay Standards bring surety to students and industry (neas.org.au/homestay/)



Stakeholders must work together to increase supply of accommodation for international students **now**

Effective Partnering is the Key



The industry must work together to ensure outcomes in housing international students to increase cap numbers
- Confirmation of hosted accommodation will assist with visa approval



Commitment to working through NEAS-endorsed hosted accommodation agencies



Combined effort to grow the host pool in ideal locations
- More rooms/accommodation for international students

Why NEAS-Approved Homestay?



Thousands of trained local hosts across Australia



Real 'Aussie' experience



Host vetting, 24/7 support and insurance



Safe, secure and friendly environment



Tailored solutions for both Over 18s and Under 18s

Why NEAS-Approved Homestay?



Students have a mentor/local support network



Opportunity to become part of the community



Fixed rates and no hidden fees



Furniture, utilities and WiFi included



Hosts can help find appropriate future accommodation

Benefits of Homestay

- ✓ Safe, supportive and welcoming environment
 - ✓ Personalised experience
 - ✓ Cultural immersion
 - ✓ Language acquisition
- ✓ Cost effective (value for money)

Partnerships with Australian Homestay Network (AHN)



Government and University partnership



Study Perth and UWA



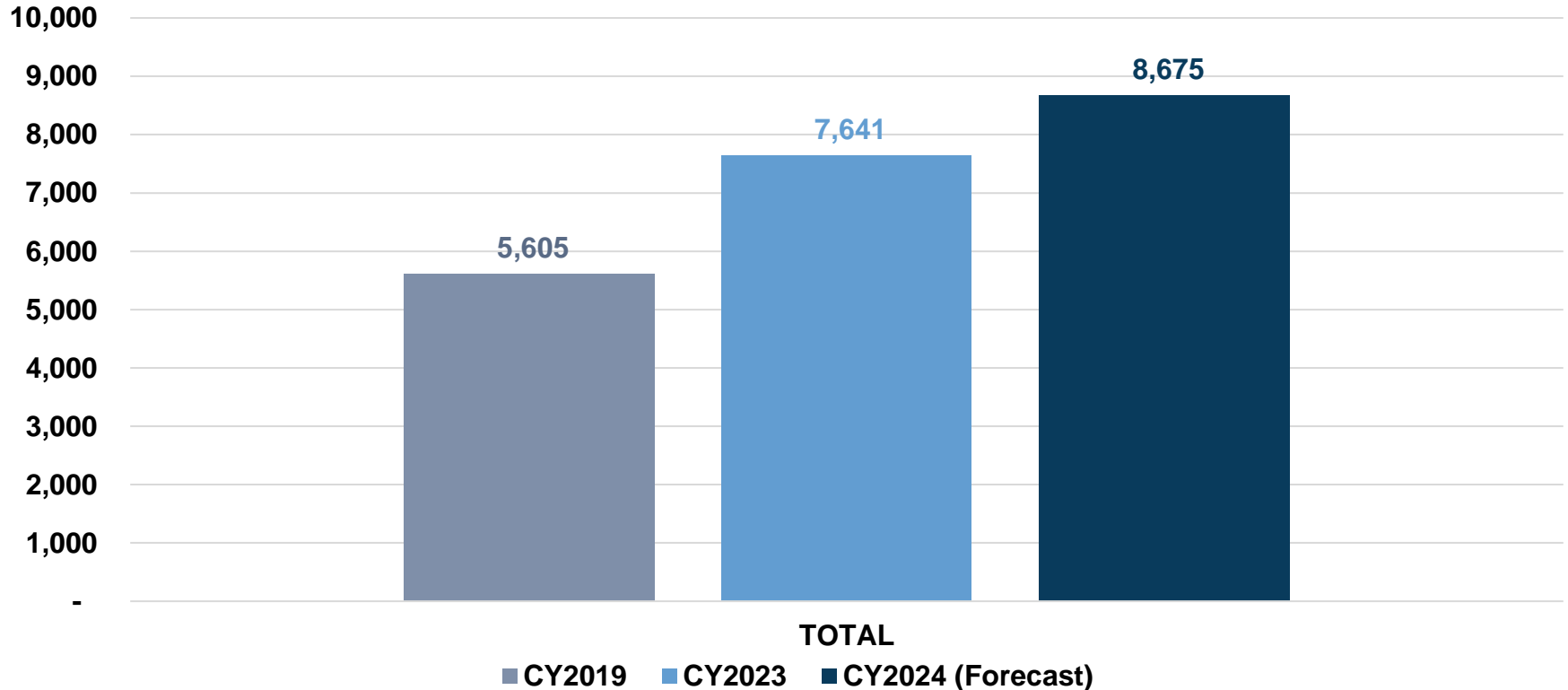
Local Government and Study Gold Coast



'Host for the Coast' Campaign with Gold Coast City Council

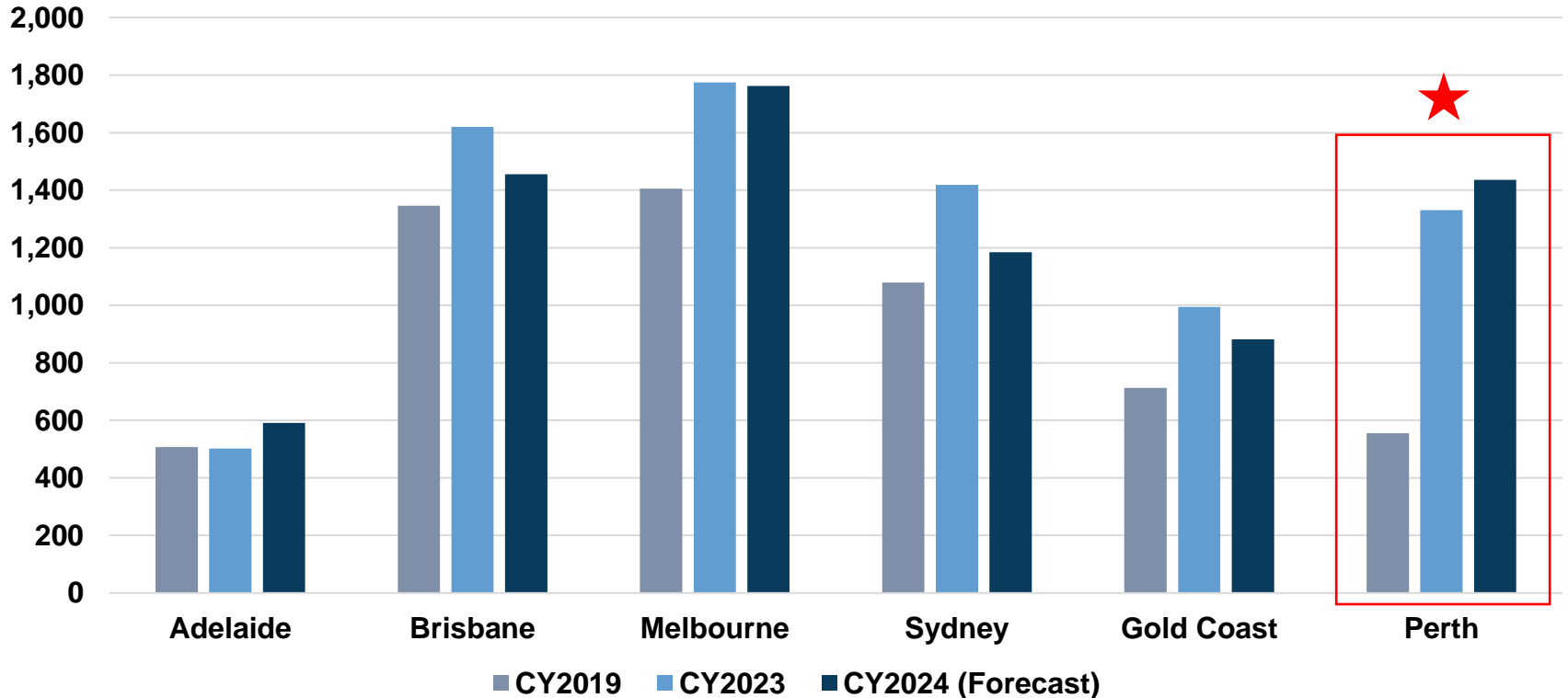
AHN Host Applications 2019 vs 2023 vs 2024

AHN Host Applications



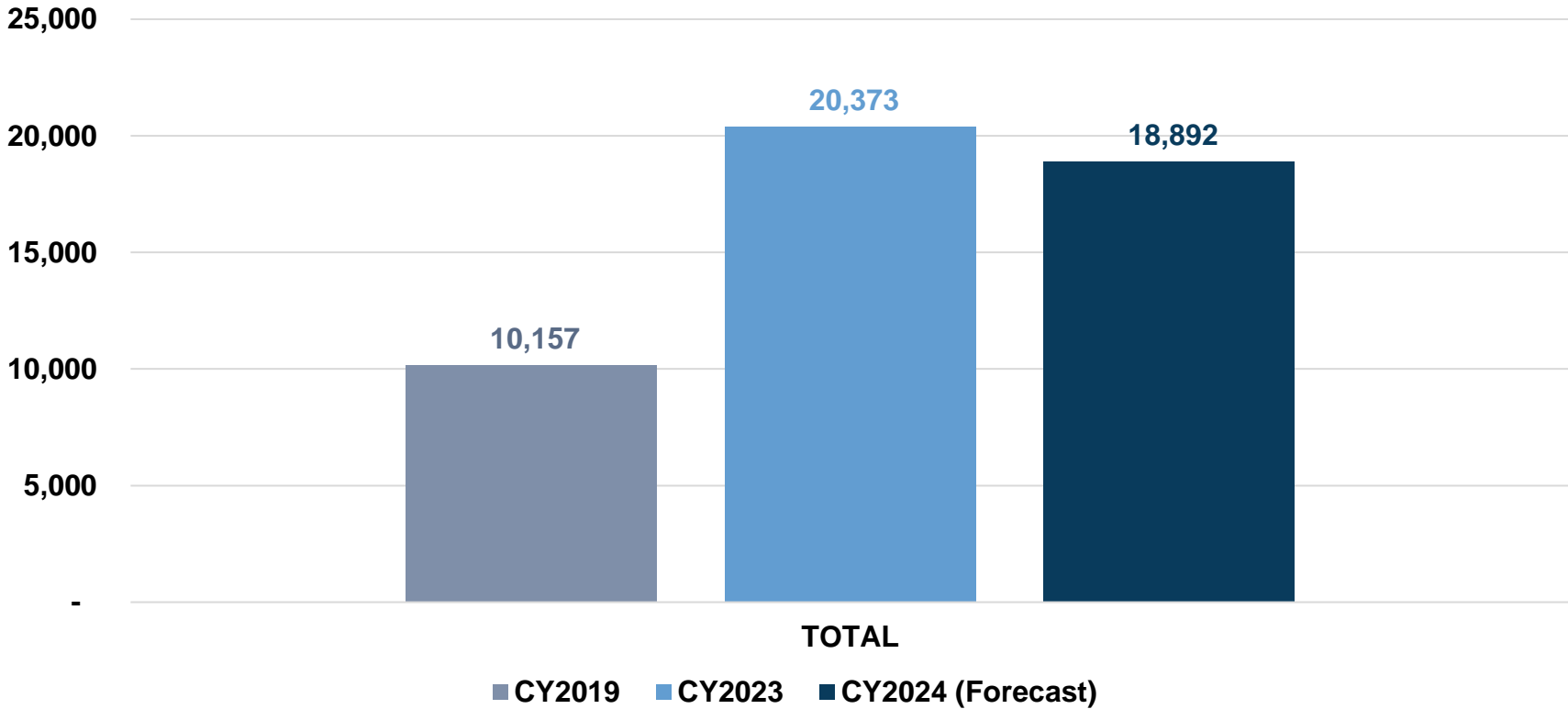
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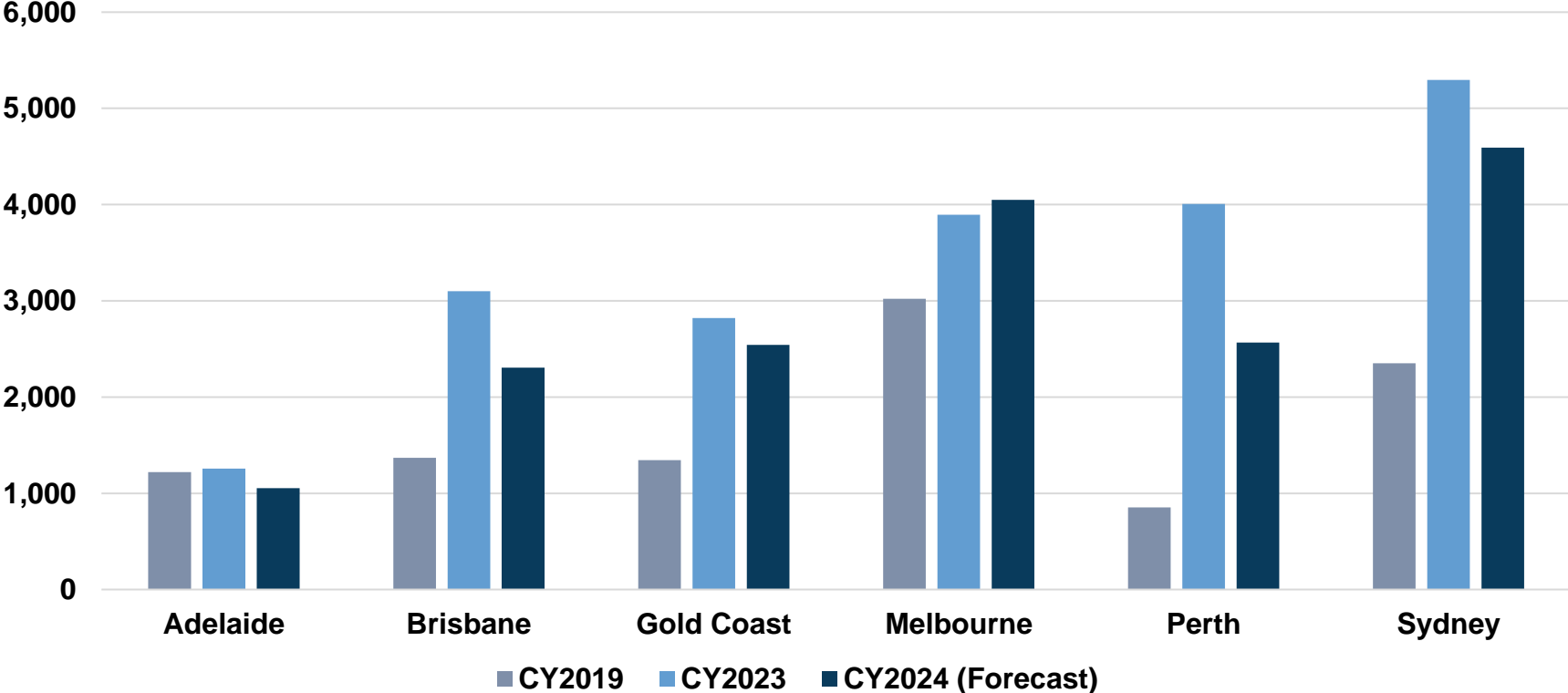
AHN Student Applications 2019 vs 2023 vs 2024

AHN Student Applications



AHN Student Applications 2019 vs 2023 vs 2024

AHN Student Applications



Australian Universities Accord Final Report

- 🏠 Following best practice models such as the ‘Host for the Coast’ program
- 🏠 Consulting with relevant stakeholders and
- 🏠 Strengthening risk management measures
 - *will allow homestay to offer meaningful and culturally connected accommodation options for international students in regional and urban settings*

What to do Next



Choose a NEAS-approved hosted accommodation (homestay) partner

- 🏠 Consistent messaging, processes, operations and support
- 🏠 Accountability for quality delivery is streamlined and efficiency enhanced



Integrate all key messages and actions into your communication with students (and potential hosts)

- 🏠 Pre-decision and pre-arrival focus for students

What to do Next



Hosts: Actively promote hosting for international students and refer all enquiries to your hosted accommodation partner



Strive with your partner to deliver quality accommodation for students that is:

Accountable, Affordable, Appropriate and Accessible

Key Messages

-  The industry has to work with Government
-  Housing is seen as the key issue – not migration
-  Effective partnerships are essential to future improvement on visa approvals and cap numbers
-  Properly-managed and accountable hosted accommodation is the short to medium term solution

Questions



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