

**Call for Abstracts for a Special Session at #SOAC2019**  
**“THE STATE OF AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND SUBURBS: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE”**

**Convenors:**

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The suburb is arguably the most ubiquitous of spaces within Australian academic, political, media and public discourses. This may be rooted in the fact that Australia has been described by Donald Horne (1964) as the *first suburban nation*. As with their Anglosphere cousins – the UK, USA and Canada – the suburbs have provoked all manner of reactions – often quite negative ones - from planning/geography/architectural scholars and other urban elites since the emergence of mass suburbanization in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Put simply, they have been described as spaces of conformity, homogeneity, (f)ugliness, heteronormativity, an environmental catastrophe and, even, the ‘geography of nowhere’ (Kunstler, 1994). Despite all this, plus efforts by state planning authorities since the 1990s to consolidate urban expansion via increasing densities, promoting transit oriented development and even introducing urban growth boundaries, suburbia has continued to grow in terms of its physical and population size, diversified in terms of its socio-cultural mix and housing types, and evolved in terms of different expressions of ways of suburban living.

To this end, the suburbs matter! They matter profoundly in terms of contemporary analyses of the state of Australia cities because this is where the majority of Australians now reside within the capital city regions as well as other significant urban areas

The suburbs matter because of questions and concerns about the deficiencies in the provision of physical and social infrastructure and the lack of a coherent, comprehensive suburban policy agenda at the state and/or federal level. They matter because this is where more and more government elections will be fought and won/lost. Ultimately, they matter because the state of the suburbs is an indication of the state of Australian cities in social, economic, cultural and environmental terms. We invite abstracts that discuss any aspect of the historical evolution, current state and future prospects of Australian ‘suburbs, suburbanization and suburbanisms’ (Keil 2017) within an Australian and/or global context. We seek abstracts for peer reviewed papers and extended abstracts for presentations from scholars/policymakers that offer thought-provoking theoretical, empirical and/or policy insights on the following, but by no means limited, themes:

- (Sub)urban planning policies at the local/state/national level;
- Suburban housing/design typologies;
- Socio-cultural diversity/homogeneity in the suburbs;
- Smart suburbs and suburban homes;
- Socio-cultural representations of suburbia, the suburban home, and suburbanites;
- Governing the suburbs from above/within/below;
- Suburban stigmatisation;
- Suburban economies and labour markets;