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Residential satisfaction in low-density Australian suburbs: The impact of social and physical context on neighbourhood contentment

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**Residential satisfaction in low-density Australian suburbs: the impact of social and physical context on neighbourhood contentment****Richard Tucker<sup>1</sup>, Zainab Abass<sup>2</sup>**

**Abstract:** This paper asks whether physical built environment characteristics or social factors have the greatest impacts on residents' satisfaction with low-density suburban neighbourhoods. Quantitative analyses of a survey of 247 residents living in three Australian suburbs was conducted to measure residential satisfaction. While the majority of research focuses only on one of three dimensions of residential satisfaction – satisfaction with dwelling *or* neighbourhood *or* neighbours – here we explore residential satisfaction in relation to all three dimensions. First, it was found that four scales used in the survey to measure satisfaction could be reduced in the context of suburban Australia to three more powerful factors – *Neighbourhood Contentment*, *Active Socialising* and *Accessibility*. Multiple regression examined the extent to which five groups of physical characteristics impacted Neighbourhood Contentment. Results indicated that Neighbourhood Contentment is significantly predicted by physical design characteristics, even allowing for the interaction of sociodemographic variables. Neighbourhood characteristics such as street type, tree coverage, and provision of sidewalks, shared open space and community spaces were found to be the most important predictors of Neighbourhood Contentment; indicating that well planned neighbourhoods are more satisfying places to live for residents. The findings suggest that planners and urban designers need to consider the provision of such neighbourhood characteristics when designing for communities in contemporary suburban contexts.

**Keywords:** Residential Satisfaction, Urban Design, Neighbourhood Attachment, Neighbouring

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