



Influencing and Supporting Policy



Professor Ronan Lyons

SCHOOL

Department of Economics
School of Social Sciences
and Philosophy

PARTNER AGENCIES

Department of Housing, Local
Government and Heritage 
Daft.ie  International
Monitory Fund  Housing
Commission

FUNDERS:

Department of Housing, Local
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SUBJECT AREAS

Economic Geography 
Economic History 
Urban Economics 
Housing 
Rental Market 
Housing
Policy

Home Truths

Few issues cause such passionate debate in Ireland as the lack of affordable housing for the people who live here. The exasperating persistence of the current situation points to the need for systemic change as the only way to tackle it.

Professor Ronan Lyons researches housing markets, urban economics and economic history. Best known in Ireland as the author of the Daft.ie sale and rental reports since 2004, he also works internationally with the IMF on residential property-price measurement.

The important feature of his work is its policy orientation. While Daft.ie provides an invaluable

data set, his work also moves to establish why the market is behaving as it is and what policies are needed to create a healthy housing system.

Through his appointment to the Housing Commission, his work has fed directly into policy development. He has also appeared before parliamentary committees, providing economic evidence to politicians considering legislation and regulation. He has also served on the board of the Higher Education Authority.

Internationally, his IMF work involves training policymakers and helping countries develop expertise in measuring residential property prices.

This work showcases how Trinity is changing public attitudes to a societal issue through multiple approaches, such as evidence-informed programmes, deliberative processes and media engagement.

Prepared by Trinity Civic Engagement for Societal Impact, September 2026



The Housing Commission

The Housing Commission, established by the Government in 2022 to examine the long-term health of Ireland's housing system, appointed Professor Lyons as one of its 14 commissioners. The commission held over 200 meetings, engaged more than 70 experts and stakeholders and ultimately produced 83 recommendations.

Professor Lyons chaired its Demand, Supply and Delivery work, looking not just at Ireland's capacity to build but asking what amount and variety of housing the country needed, and the structural shortages that exist due to decades of undersupply. His 2025 appearance at the Oireachtas housing committee put the requirement for new homes at between 85,000 and 100,000 a year to address the need. This better reflects the creation of a housing market that actually suits the changing housing needs that Ireland has.

The Right to Housing

One particular section of the Housing Commission's work was the request by the Government to consider whether there should be a referendum on a constitutional right to housing and, if so, what form an amendment should take. While many of the Commission members moved towards support for a proposed constitutional amendment, Professor Lyons did not.

Instead, with the support of legal experts in this space, he led a minority report on the issue that was, ultimately, signed by three Commissioners and submitted to the Minister for Housing in November 2023.

This minority report argued that Ireland's crisis was fundamentally systemic and therefore required systemic legislative and policy responses. Professor Lyons' concern was that a constitutional right could transfer important housing-policy decisions from the Oireachtas to the courts. In evidence to the Oireachtas in 2024, Lyons argued that housing policy should be made by elected legislators rather than determined through litigation arising from individual cases.

That position put Professor Lyons on the dissenting side of a sensitive debate in Irish housing policy. It also, however, moved beyond the symbolic power of a proposed constitutional right; it questioned what, in practical terms, it would do to either resolve or exacerbate the societal challenge of housing supply for Ireland.

Daft.ie Housing Reports

Since 2004, Professor Lyons has been the author of the Daft.ie housing reports, making him one of the longest-running public voices with a focus on Ireland's residential market. His work tracks sale and rental prices and, most importantly, availability. The reports enhance the national evidence base, providing policymakers with a near-continuous picture of what is happening on the ground.

These reports provide an ongoing non-governmental civic focus to the issue of housing. In the 2026 Daft analysis, Professor Lyons highlighted exceptionally low rental availability and a housing market increasingly divided between urban and rural areas, with the stock of second-hand homes for sale only about half its pre-pandemic level.

Outputs

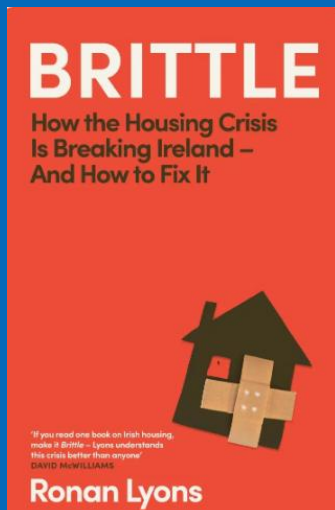


Constitutional Referendum on Right to Housing (2024)

Professor Lyons addressed the Oireachtas Joint Committee on Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 22 October 2024 as discussions began on the constitutional amendment on the right to housing.

Report of the Housing Commission (2024)

This is the final report of the Housing Commission, a body appointed by the Minister for Housing, Local Government and Heritage tasked with examining issues such as tenure, standards, sustainability and quality-of-life matters, considering long-term housing policy while building on the policy changes outlined in Housing for All and related government policies.



Brittle (2026)

Professor Lyons' new book positions Ireland's housing problems within a system which has become brittle, losing the ability to respond to changes in needs as society changes.

“Living provisionally — having to postpone forming your own family and decline new job offers — creates a backdrop of chronic low-grade worry.”

Professor Ronan Lyons describes the effects of the unavailability of housing
Financial Times interview with
John Burns-Murdoch
August 2026



Professor Ronan Lyons is a Professor in Economics at Trinity and a PI at the Centre for Economics, Policy & History (CEPH). His research focuses on housing markets, urban economics and economic history and in particular on the intersection of those areas: how housing markets evolve in urban environments over the long term. He is also a consultant to the IMF on residential property prices, a frequent contributor to national and international media on Irish housing and the broader economy and the author of the quarterly Daft.ie Reports on the Irish housing market. From 2017 to 2022, he was a Board Member of the Higher Education Authority and a member of Ireland's 2022-2024 Housing Commission, advising government on housing policy.

For More Information

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