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## **Private Lives: Australians at Home Since Federation**

Peter Timms  
Miegunyah Press, \$49.95



IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO read this finely written and beautifully illustrated book without reflecting on the houses one has lived in or known. But *Private Lives* offers much more than a

nostalgia trip or amusement at the fads and appliances that transformed the modern house. "What turned the house from fortress to fish bowl?" asks Peter Timms. As he journeys through each room, he explores broader notions about the changing relationship between the family unit and the individual, about toil and ease and about public and private spaces. Important social changes are traced in the disappearance of the tradesman entrance and the dining room, the embrace of the modern kitchen and laundry, emphasis on comfort in the bedroom and the rise in the popularity of the patio. Perhaps most important of all, while the suburban dream is "alive and well, it is no longer the only permissible dream".