



GREATER SHEPPARTON CITY COUNCIL

AFFORDABLE HOUSING STRATEGY

Houses for People

April 2020



GREATER
SHEPPARTON

Acknowledgement of Traditional Owners

We, Greater Shepparton City Council, acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land which now comprises Greater Shepparton. We pay respect to their tribal Elders, we celebrate their continuing culture and we acknowledge the memory of their ancestors.

Prepared by
Greater Shepparton City Council
And
Affordable Development Outcomes

With assistance from
Residents of Greater Shepparton
Beyond Housing
Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative Ltd
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Greater Shepparton Women's Charter Advisory Committee

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greater Shepparton City Council (Council) recognises adequate housing as a basic human right and the foundation on which the region’s liveability, health and wellbeing, productivity, and community participation is built.

Evidence highlights that not everyone in the community has access to appropriate and affordable housing that suits their needs and housing journey. This has significant social and economic impacts on individuals, households and the community.

Homelessness is the most urgent aspect of bigger issues of housing insecurity and takes many forms, including people living in unsafe, overcrowded or short-term housing or motels, as well as those ‘sleeping rough’ in cars or on the street. Greater Shepparton has the highest rate of homelessness in regional Victoria¹ and a large number of very low and low income households in housing stress.

There are a range of factors that affect the demand, supply and cost of housing and reasons that people fall into housing stress or homelessness. Some households are particularly vulnerable and may also require additional social supports to maintain tenancies and participate in the community.

Provision of Affordable Housing, particularly Social Housing, responds to gaps in the market and supports very low, low and where necessary, moderate income households into housing that is more affordable and appropriate for their needs. Delivering Affordable Housing requires a land-use planning response to ensure there is an adequate supply of a diversity of housing in the right locations, as well as an economic and social response to ensure this housing is affordable and available to households in need.

Land, planning, capacity and significant investment is required to address the homelessness and the shortage of Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton.

In response to legislative changes, and reflecting Council’s role as the Planning Authority, the **Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy 2020** establishes the evidence of Affordable Housing need and the actions that Council will take to facilitate an increase in supply and build on existing actions to support housing supply, diversity and quality in Greater Shepparton.

Underpinned by a ‘Housing First’ approach, the Strategy aims to support investment and action to increase in crisis and specialised accommodation; increase Social Housing; improve the diversity of housing choice; and increase the diversity of dwellings in Greater Shepparton.

Meeting this challenge requires partnerships between all levels of government, the not-for-profit and private sectors and targeted investment to ensure Greater Shepparton has sufficient and appropriate ‘Houses for People’, particularly those on very low and low incomes and achieves the vision that:

All members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable Housing is housing that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low or moderate income households.

Affordable Housing encompasses a range of programs, including housing for rent or purchase that is suitable and affordable for very low, low and moderate income households. The primary type of Affordable Housing is Social Housing, which is housing owned and managed by the State Government or not-for-profit housing organisations, including Indigenous housing agencies.

Affordable Housing is typically rented or sold at a discount to rent or by way of a contribution to support home purchase. Households living in Affordable Housing may also require other supports to maintain their tenancy or engage in the community.

Affordable Housing should be located close to services and transport, integrated across the neighbourhood and be of a high-quality design and build.

Why do we need Affordable Housing?

There is extensive evidence of the need for Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton, with a significant proportion of Greater Shepparton's population affected by housing insecurity in some form.

More than 800 homeless or marginally housed people are estimated to live in Greater Shepparton, including people who are sleeping in tents on the riverbank or in their cars. Growing instances of homelessness include increases in women fleeing family violence, with consequences including children not going to school, families losing vital community connections, or women remaining in unsafe home environments.

Other vulnerable groups include older people, young people, single people, single parent families, recently arrived immigrants, people with a disability and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. Lower income homeowners may also experience housing stress.

For students and prospective workers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing can make Greater Shepparton a less attractive place to live. It can also lead to people having to remain in unsuitable or unsafe housing situations or occupying larger dwellings with higher housing costs.

Access to Affordable Housing at a time of crisis is particularly critical to assist people to avoid homelessness and begin to re-build their lives. A 'Housing First' approach aims to provide people with a roof over their heads as a priority before supporting people with a range of services to enable them to rebuild their lives.

"You cannot have certainty when you have no home, you get depression, things don't connect, you feel unvalued as a person, a failure." Survey respondent

Increasing the supply of Affordable Housing has a range of social and economic benefits for households and the wider Greater Shepparton community, including:

- Reductions in homelessness supports, health, human services, emergency services and criminal justice costs;
- Improved education and training outcomes and reduced social disadvantage;
- Supporting the expansion of services such as hospital and education facilities by ensuring housing options for key workers; and
- Increased expenditure through construction of Affordable Housing and by freeing up individual household income for non-housing expenditure in the community.

Adequate Affordable Housing underpins the future productivity of Greater Shepparton, enabling staffing of expanding infrastructure like our hospital, educational institutions and sporting facilities. It supports workers to live near their employment and within their community, with ongoing benefit to families, social cohesion and the environment.

Community surveys undertaken by Council in June 2019 found that 96% of all respondents consider Affordable Housing as an issue that is 'important' or 'very important' to Greater Shepparton's social and economic growth.

What is the Affordable Housing need in Greater Shepparton?

There are a range of complex factors that impact on the provision and diversity of housing in Greater Shepparton and on the circumstances that lead to homelessness and housing stress. Only some of these fall within Council's area of influence.

The Strategy classifies three levels of need:

1. **Acute Housing Need** – experienced by people who are **homelessⁱⁱ** and those who are **marginally housed**. People in acute housing need may require short term crisis accommodation or supported accommodation before transitioning to longer term Social Housing. A 'Housing First' approach seeks to prioritise the development of housing for people in acute housing need.

The evidence of homelessness in Greater Shepparton is alarming, estimated at a rate of 5.56 homeless persons per 1,000 people – the highest in regional Victoria.ⁱⁱⁱ

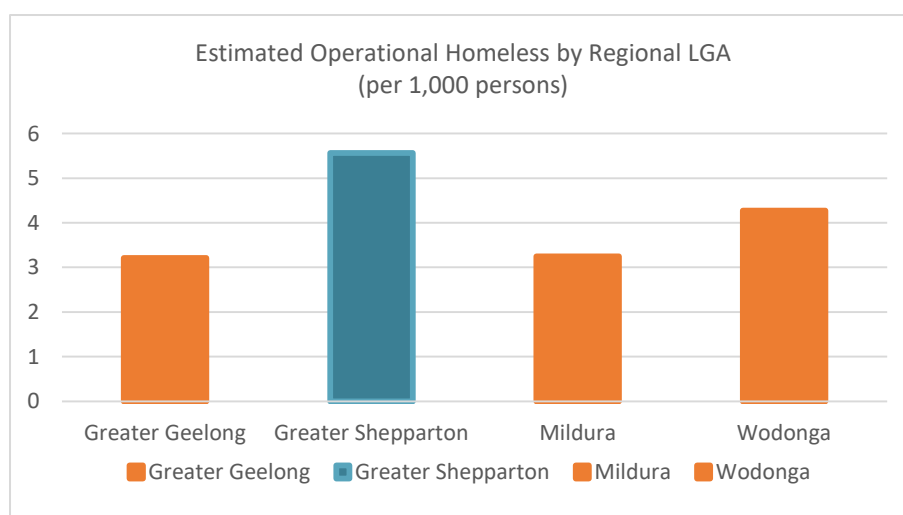


Figure 1: Estimated 'operational homeless' by Regional LGA, 2016 (ABS Census)

2. **'At risk' Housing Need** – includes people who are in mortgage or rental stress, who are renting without a lease, or otherwise experiencing hardship, and who are vulnerable to trigger events that may prompt a housing crisis or eviction. These households may have a place to live but may not be able to afford other costs of living, or their housing may not be appropriate. Households 'at-risk' may require long-term Affordable Housing or short-term financial supports to meet their direct housing costs and reduce housing stress.

It is estimated that Greater Shepparton has an estimated shortfall of at least 1,700 dwellings required to ensure existing very low to low income residents are not homeless or in housing stress.

3. **Potential Housing Need** – includes people that cannot afford to enter the property market or that could fall into housing stress if housing costs rise, low levels of housing diversity continue and there is no increase in Affordable Housing. These households will benefit from adequate housing supply, greater housing diversity and may require support to not fall into housing stress.

There was a 10% decline in the affordability of the private rental market between 2008 and 2018 in Greater Shepparton with only 30% one-bedroom rental lettings affordable for a single person on Newstart in 2018.^{iv}

Income is not the only factor that determines the availability of suitable housing, with housing supply and diversity impacting on housing costs and choice.

Whilst there are reasonable rates of land supply, 87% of dwellings in Greater Shepparton are detached houses and 72% have three or more bedrooms. Only 3.6% of housing comprises one-bedroom, in comparison to the proportion of single person households (27% of households).

This results in higher demand for smaller housing types and challenges particularly for single person low-income households to find housing that is suitable in size and cost. The physical form of housing can also impact on other living costs such as transport and utility bills.

Delivery of a diversity of housing is a broader challenge within the Greater Shepparton context, with limited opportunities for higher density housing and the development of smaller dwellings considered less viable compared to the return on larger dwellings. The release of land to the market and its cost is also controlled by the private sector. These are complex issues that are primarily addressed through Council continuing to facilitate timely land supply through the planning system, encouraging housing diversity and supporting the delivery of infrastructure. Improving housing supply and diversity does not however guarantee an Affordable Housing outcome for people in need.

What is the cost of addressing the problem?

Addressing the problems and supporting the development of new Affordable Housing will take time and significant resources.

It is estimated that more than \$260 million in new investment is required to house the 1,041 households in Greater Shepparton on the Victorian Housing Register in 2019, including 485 households identified as being in priority need.^v Significant additional investment is required to provide support to households in housing stress to reduce the likelihood of slipping into a crisis situation or longer-term homelessness.

The scale of investment required is beyond the role and capacity of Council and is reliant on Federal and State Government funding. This funding can be leveraged by Council actions and partnerships between the private and not-for-profit sectors, maximising the investment to achieve the greatest number and diversity of housing responses. **Whilst the demand for and supply of Affordable Housing is a complicated and fluid issue, the cost of not responding is too great to ignore.**

How will the Strategy address local Affordable Housing need?

With a multitude of both individual and systemic contributing factors impacting on the need and provision of Affordable Housing, there is not a single solution to reducing homelessness, housing stress and demand for Affordable Housing and increasing supply.

Council has undertaken preparation of the ***Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy: Houses for People 2020*** to broaden the understanding of Affordable Housing need across the municipality and to strengthen local responsiveness; ensuring there is a strong foundation for new investment in Affordable Housing that is in the right locations and of the appropriate dwelling type, size and quality.

The Strategy builds on existing Council's community support programs and policies including the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme, *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011*, and *2018-2028 Public Health Strategy*, which recognise the importance of affordability, consistent dwelling supply, and wider housing diversity in the municipality as well as the importance of Affordable Housing on health and well-being and inclusive communities.

The Strategy adopts a 'Housing First' approach and provides Council and stakeholders with a common framework for focusing advocacy, action and investment on four key elements for Affordable Housing provision: ***Organisational Capacity, Land, Planning Direction, and Investment.***

A 'Housing First' approach aims to ensure people experiencing housing stress and insecurity, particularly homelessness, are first provided with a stable housing foundation on which the rest of a person's life can be rebuilt. Other supports can then be provided if required.

Analysis of the evidence of need in Greater Shepparton demonstrates that a range of Affordable Housing outcomes are required to suit the diversity of household needs and deliver on a 'housing first' approach. This will require adequate housing supply, improved housing diversity and significant investment in crisis and Social Housing, delivered through partnerships across governments, the not-for-profit housing sector and the private sector.

The Strategy commits Council to undertake actions within its role and to facilitate and focus on supporting the development of 'shovel-ready' Affordable Housing projects suitable for government

investment. In the short term, smaller scale actions will also be undertaken to improve the situations of vulnerable residents.

A key Council role as Planning Authority will be extended to reflect requirements under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PAEA) 'to facilitate to provision of Affordable Housing in Victoria' when undertaking land-use planning and assessing planning amendments and permits. Opportunities to engage with landowners will be identified and a framework for negotiation established.

Overview of the Strategy and Action Plan

The *Affordable Housing Strategy 2020* strengthens Council's policy position to respond to this legislative framework and better support the provision of Affordable Housing through setting a strategic framework to enhance existing policies, and to maximise Council's capacity to serve the community and achieve its vision that:

All members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing.

The Strategy applies eight criteria that have been established by the State Government and provides a framework to guide future residential development towards Affordable Housing provision and facilitate actions result in dwellings that are appropriate for use by very low, low or moderate income households.

Council's vision has been expanded into four key objectives with corresponding measures of success identified to guide actions and monitoring of outcomes:

Vision			
All members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate Housing			
Levels of identified need			
Acute	At risk		Potential
Objectives to address identified gaps			
1 Increase crisis and specialised housing responses to support vulnerable households	2 Increase Social Housing stock	3 Increase diversity of housing choice, including 'alternative' housing and lifestyle typologies.	4 Increase diversity of dwelling size, beginning with one and two bedroom dwellings
Measures of Success			
1 The proportion of the population in acute housing need is decreased from a 2016 baseline of 5.6 persons per 1,000.	2 The supply of Affordable Housing (Inc. Social Housing) is increased from a 2016 baseline of 6.1% of all dwellings.	3 The proportion of low income households in housing stress is decreased from a 2016 baseline of 27%.	4 Dwelling supply correlates more closely with distribution of household size. <i>(The supply of one and two bedroom dwellings is increased from a 2016 baseline of 18.6% of all dwellings.)</i>

Table 1: Affordable Housing vision, levels of identified need, objectives, and measures of success

The Action Plan sets out the key activities that Council will progress that aim to provide a foundation for incremental change as well as actions that may be able to facilitate Affordable Housing in the short-medium term.

In this inaugural Affordable Housing Strategy, Council will focus on:

- Actions that support the delivery of Social Housing including crisis accommodation, including assessment of government assets and increased and coordinated advocacy for investment;
- Innovative means to provide specialised housing responses for vulnerable households; and
- Increasing the diversity of housing to correlate more closely with household size distribution.

Key actions include:

- Establishing an Affordable Housing Reference Group to guide implementation and further strengthen local partnerships and advocacy;
- Strengthening of provisions in the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme to better respond to Affordable Housing opportunities and facilitate private sector participation;
- Assessment of Council-owned assets and locations of community infrastructure;
- Ongoing community engagement;
- Advocacy for State and Federal funding for housing and infrastructure.

Implementation of the strategy will be monitored annually by Council, in conjunction with the Affordable Housing Reference Group.

A review of the Strategy and Action Plan will be undertaken in 2027.

Navigating the Strategy

Section 1 provides an overview of Greater Shepparton's housing context, which provides the justification for the actions in the Strategy. It summarises the background information in the Greater Shepparton *Affordable Housing Issues and Opportunities Paper 2020*, outlining Council's basis for action, the government policy context and key challenges and opportunities.

Section 2 sets out the Action Plan that identifies Council's activities to achieve the Strategy's Vision and Objectives over the next seven years.

GLOSSARY AND ABBREVIATIONS

AHRG	Affordable Housing Reference Group (see Action C. 1)
CALD	Culturally and Linguistically Diverse
Council	Greater Shepparton City Council
DELWP	Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (Victorian Government)
DHHS	Department of Health and Human Services (Victorian Government)
PAEA	<i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i>
Affordable Housing	<p>‘Affordable Housing’ is a specific type of housing response, defined under the PAEA as ‘<i>Housing, including Social Housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households.</i>’</p> <p>Encompasses a spectrum of housing types, including Social Housing, crisis housing, transitional housing, supported accommodation, affordable rental, shared equity home ownership, affordable home purchase.</p>
Housing Affordability	‘Housing affordability’ refers to the cost of housing compared to the financial capacity of a household to meet their housing costs, whether rent or mortgage payments. See Housing stress.
Housing Insecurity	Housing insecurity reflects any kind of uncertainty of tenure, encompassing a number of dimensions, including lack of privacy, lack of belonging, lack of physical comfort, high mobility (frequent moves between dwellings), housing instability (lack of control over one’s own circumstances), and feeling unsafe.
Housing stress	A household is considered to be in ‘housing stress’ if it spends more than 30% of its income on housing costs and the household’s earnings place them in the bottom 40% of incomes in the area. ^{vi}
Inclusionary zoning	A land use planning measure used by governments that either mandates or incentivises the inclusion of a proportion of Affordable Housing dwellings in a residential development.
Ministerial Notice	A directive issued by the Victorian Minister for Planning under Section 3AA92) of the PAEA, specifying matters which must be regarded for the purpose of determining what is appropriate for the needs of very low, low and moderate income earners. Includes: allocation: affordability; longevity; tenure; type of housing (form and quality); integration (physical build and local community); and official estimates of housing need.

Registered Housing Agency	<p>A not-for-profit organisation that is registered by the Victorian Government under the <i>Housing Act 1983</i> as a provider or operator of Affordable Housing. Housing Agencies have a dedicated charitable purpose to deliver and manage Affordable Housing and are the primary recipients of Government grants or financial support when it is available.</p> <p>Registration means that the organisation’s work in providing Affordable Housing must comply with a range of standards and reporting obligations that are monitored by an independent Housing Registrar. Agencies are also regulated as charities by the Australian Charities and Not-for-profit Commission and the Australian Taxation Office. Other organisations may also provide and/or manage specialised forms of Affordable Housing or deliver wrap-around support services to tenants but may not be registered as a Housing Agency.</p>
Social Housing	<p>An umbrella term for Public Housing that is owned and managed by the Director of Housing (through the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS)), and housing that is owned or managed by a Registered Housing Agency (RHA) where the dwelling is allocated to a household that meets the Social Housing income and asset eligibility requirements. Some agencies focus on specific high-risk groups, such as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households, households with a disability or older people.</p> <p>Social Housing is prioritised for households with low to very low incomes who are not able to meet their housing needs in the housing market without falling into housing stress. People may have experienced homelessness, family violence or have special housing needs, or may be aged pensioners, families, and students. RHAs and DHHS allocate stock to those in most need and facilitate any required support services. Social Housing encompasses crisis and transitional accommodation.</p>
Specialised housing	<p>Housing developed to provide for the needs of a specific cohort, such as women, youth, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples.</p>
Victorian Housing Register	<p>A State Government managed waiting list for Social Housing allocation.</p>

SECTION 1 - CONTEXT

What is Affordable Housing?

In June 2018, the Victorian Government passed changes to the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PAEA), which governs Council's responsibilities as Planning Authority, implementing the objective 'to facilitate to provision of Affordable Housing in Victoria'.

The changes incorporated a legislated definition, defining Affordable Housing as **"Housing, including Social Housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households."**^{vii}

What qualifies a very low, low and moderate income household?

The State Government specifies the following income ranges to define 'low', 'very low', and 'moderate' income levels for households in regional areas for the purpose of setting eligibility for Affordable Housing (Table 2). Income ranges will be updated annually by the State Government.

Not all households that earn within these income ranges require Affordable Housing, rather this sets a framework for assessing household eligibility for Affordable Housing. Social Housing has different income limits.

	Very low income range	Low income range	Moderate income range
Single person	\$18,920	\$18,921 to \$30,280	\$30,281 to \$45,420
Couple	\$28,390	\$28,391 to \$45,420	\$45,425 to \$68,130
Family	\$39,740	\$39,741 to \$65,590	\$63,591 to \$95,380

Table 2: Defined income ranges for areas in Victoria outside the Greater Capital City Statistical Area of Melbourne for the 2019-2020 financial year.^{viii}

What is affordable for very low, low or moderate income households?

An assessment of what would be affordable for these households assuming they spend 30% of their gross household income on housing costs has been estimated (Table 3).

Household type		Single	Couple	Family*
Very low Income	Income Limit	< \$18,920	< \$28,390	< \$39,740
	Affordable Rent/week	< \$109	< \$164	< \$229
	Affordable Purchase**	< \$81,848	< \$122,815	< \$171,915
Low Income	Income Limit	< \$30,280	< \$45,420	< \$63,590
	Affordable Rent/week	< \$175	< \$262	< \$367
	Affordable Purchase**	< \$130,991	< \$196,486	< \$275,089
Moderate Income	Income Limit	< \$45,420	< \$68,130	< \$95,380
	Affordable Rent/week	< \$262	< \$393	< \$550
	Affordable Purchase**	< \$196,486	< \$294,729	< \$412,612

Table 3: Defined income ranges for areas in Victoria outside the Greater Capital City Statistical Area of Melbourne for the 2019-2020 financial year. (Source: Victoria Government Gazette 6 June 2019)

* 'Family' includes one or two parents, with dependent children. ** Affordable Purchase assumes 30 per cent of income on housing costs, 10 per cent deposit, average 6.69 per cent interest rate, 30 year term.

An assessment of income capacity compared to median house prices in Greater Shepparton indicates which households are likely to face greater housing stress (Table 4).

	Household type	Single	Couple	Family
Very Low Income	Income Limit	\$18,920	\$28,390	\$39,740
	Rental Gap	-\$116	-\$121	-\$56
	Purchase Gap	-\$107,488	-\$157,776	-\$110,060
Low Income	Income Limit	\$30,280	\$45,420	\$63,590
	Rental Gap	-\$50	-\$23	\$82
	Purchase Gap	-\$59,816	-\$86,224	-\$9,871
Moderate Income	Income Limit	\$45,420	\$68,130	\$95,380
	Rental Gap	\$37	\$108	\$265
	Purchase Gap	\$9,486	\$17,729	\$135,612

Table 4: Indicative Affordability Gap Assessment by Household Type (estimated potential gap in red)

Where median rents or price points are greater than a household’s income capacity – shown in red – a household may require housing support or direct Affordable Housing provision to ensure they are not in acute housing need or at risk of housing stress and homelessness.

Each household is different, with gaps also varying by household type and location. This analysis indicates that very low and low income households in Greater Shepparton are more likely to experience housing stress.

Why does Greater Shepparton need Affordable Housing?

Council recognises adequate housing as a basic human right and the foundation on which our region’s liveability, health, wellbeing, productivity, and community participation is built. However, not everyone in the community currently has access to appropriate and secure housing that suits their needs and their housing journey.

The full evidence base outlining the need for Affordable Housing is set out in the ***Affordable Housing Issues and Opportunities Paper***.

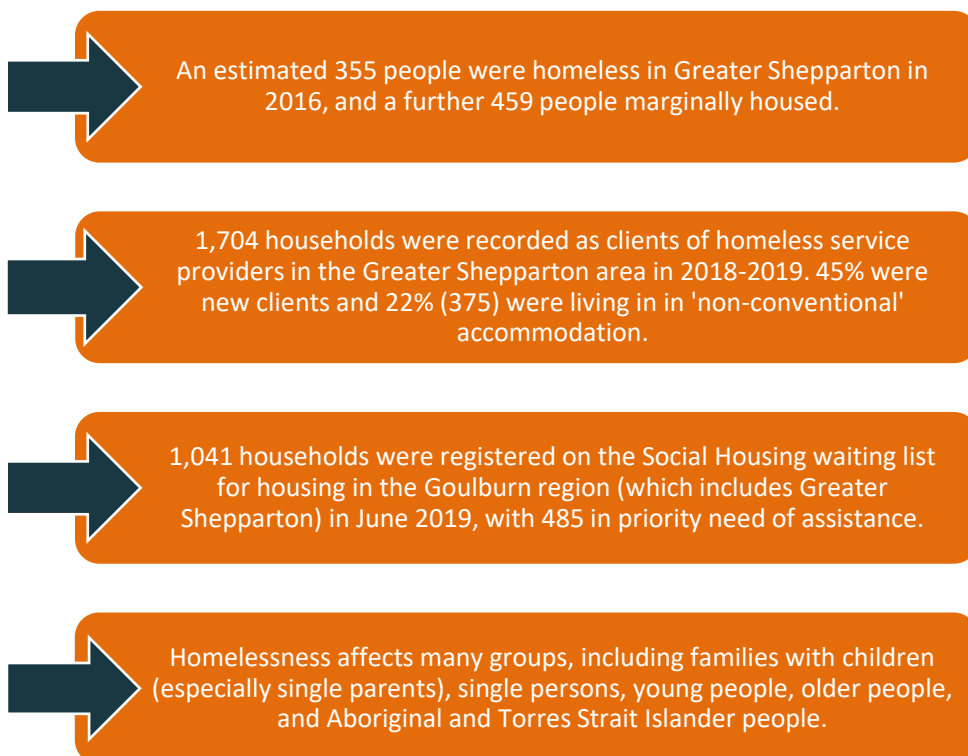
This work established an extensive evidence base of the need for Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton, including a spectrum of housing needs in the municipality, reflecting difficulties in both obtaining and maintaining appropriate housing, and ranging from homelessness and marginal housing, through housing stress, to shortages of particular dwelling types. Both renters and owners were evidenced to experience housing stress and may be vulnerable to ‘trigger events’ that precipitate a housing crisis.

Levels of need

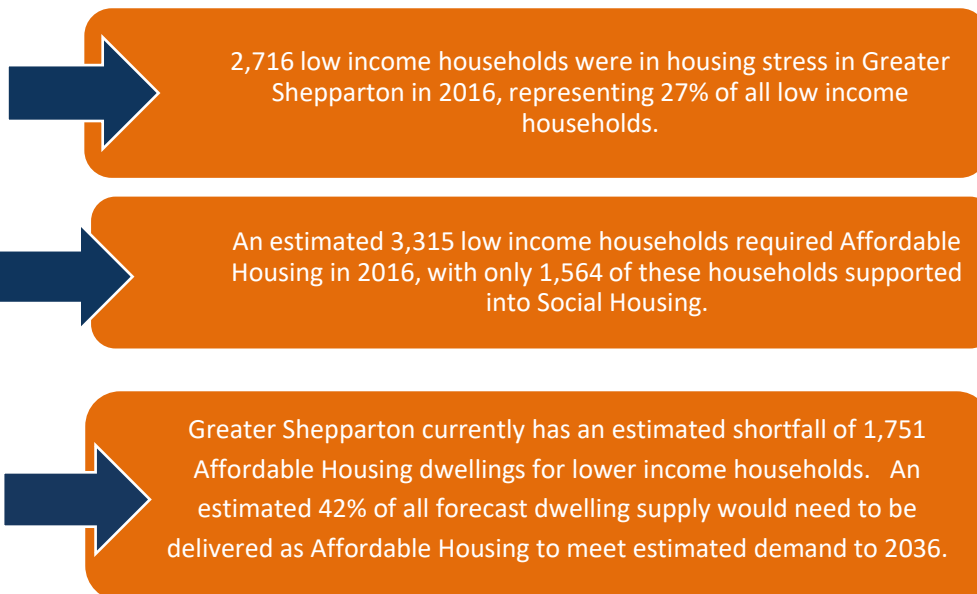
The Strategy classifies three levels of need requiring action:

1. **Acute Housing Need** – experienced by people who are **homeless**^{ix} and those who are **marginally housed**. Those in acute housing need may require short term crisis accommodation before transitioning to longer term social housing, which subsidises housing costs to at an affordable level.

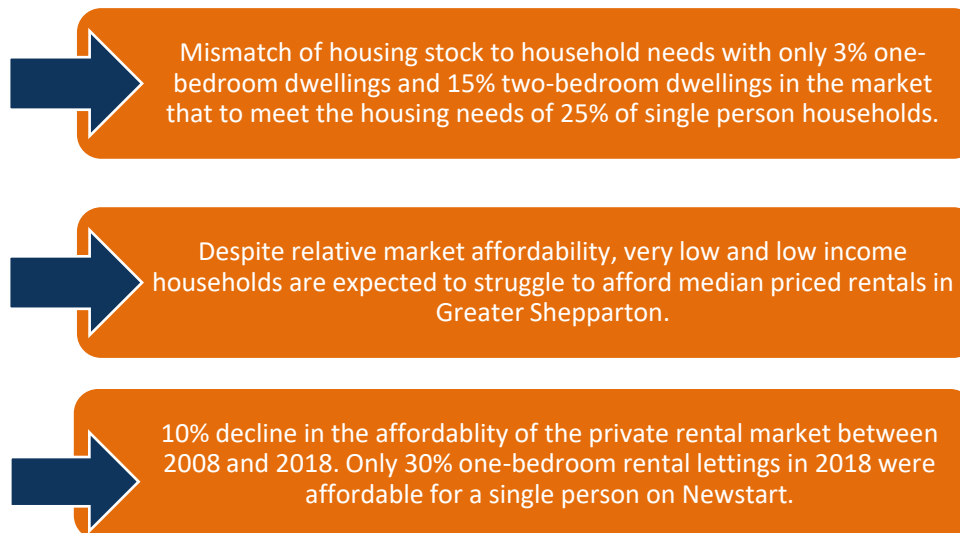
In Australia, it has been estimated that for every \$1 invested in 'last resort' crisis accommodation beds to address homelessness, \$2.70 worth of benefits are generated in the community. Moving a person from crisis accommodation into a stable and affordable long-term dwelling is estimated to reduce government costs by an average of \$11,935 in FY19 dollars per person, per year, as a result of reduced interaction with services.^x



2. **'At risk' Housing Need** – people who are in housing stress or otherwise experiencing hardship and are vulnerable to trigger events that may prompt a housing crisis or eviction, such as illness, an accident, or redundancy. This category includes people who have secure, low-moderate incomes, but who cannot obtain suitable accommodation.



3. **Potential Housing Need** – people that cannot afford to enter the property market or could fall into housing stress if declines in housing affordability and low levels of housing diversity continue and there is no increase in Affordable Housing supply.



“Housing is very expensive in this region and there are many people who are unable to pay the rents. I understand there are many people who are living in cars or without homes. This is a big problem for our community.”

Survey respondent

Vulnerable Households

The research has identified a range of households that are disproportionately affected by housing insecurity.

There can be a range of cohort-specific factors that contribute to housing stress, encompassing both personal and societal elements, including the fluctuations of the housing market itself. Some of the priority groups experiencing housing stress and homelessness in Greater Shepparton for whom Affordable Housing is critical are highlighted below. This is not a comprehensive list but highlights the range of factors that impact on households that may be particularly vulnerable.

Women

Women, and particularly older women, are 'at-risk' of housing insecurity as there are a wide array of factors that may accumulate into disadvantage, including irregular employment history, minimal superannuation and assets, and increased risk of experiencing family violence.

Women predominate in lower paid and part-time employment categories and may spend extended periods out of the workforce in caring roles. These factors often inhibit women's eligibility for employment opportunities and housing loans. Even single older women who own property may be unable to meet other housing costs due to limited financial capacity.

Older women aged 55 years and over are the fastest growing cohort of homeless Australians, increasing by 31% nationally between 2011 and 2016.^{xi}

61.3% (1,045) of presentations to homeless service providers in 2018/2019 in Greater Shepparton identified as female.^{xii}

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander (ATSI) identifying households can have specific housing needs to ensure cultural appropriateness of housing and capacity for households to respond to changing family circumstances and responsibilities, cultural needs, and discrimination.^{xiii} In 2020 Aboriginal Housing Victoria developed an Aboriginal Homelessness and Housing Framework, endorsed by the Victorian Government "*Mana-na worn-tyeen maar-takoort: Every Aboriginal Person Has a Home*" which sets out a blueprint to improve Aboriginal housing outcomes in a generation.

Whilst ATSI households comprise an estimated 3.4% of the Greater Shepparton population, 27% of household clients presenting to homeless service providers in 2018-2019 identified as Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander.^{xiv}

Older people

Older persons are particularly vulnerable to housing insecurity if they haven't achieved home ownership by retirement, and those who own their home may not be able to maintain it. Older people reliant on the Age Pension may also find it difficult to meet living costs, resulting in people going without heating, food, or medication in order to meet their housing costs.^{xv} Older people seeking to downsize to reduce costs of living are often not able to stay within their community as smaller houses are not available and the costs of selling and buying are prohibitive.

Persons aged over 60 years were the fastest growing population group in Greater Shepparton between 2011 and 2016.^{xvi}

Young people

Young people are constrained by very low incomes and limited rental history. Whilst young people may have greater propensity to sharing a house, for some young people this is not a suitable option. Young people are also particularly vulnerable to family violence and are more likely to couch surf or live in other inappropriate housing circumstances. Newstart is a notably low income support payment which makes meeting housing costs very difficult for single young people.

The success of the Youth Foyer in Greater Shepparton highlights the importance of tailored housing responses for young people who are particularly vulnerable and can ensure that education and training can be achieved.

People with a disability

People with a disability face additional barriers to accessing suitable and affordable housing that are different to other cohorts of the population. They require homes that are accessible and adaptable, and enable informal support as well as independent living, and that encourage social inclusion, economic participation and health and wellbeing.^{xvii} Older people with disabilities may own their home but will be at risk of mortgage stress or be unable to meet other housing related costs.

Over 3,800 people in Greater Shepparton reported needing assistance to undertake day-to-day activities in 2016, representing approximately 6% of the population.^{xviii}

Community Costs

In addition to the individual costs of housing insecurity, Council recognises that the whole municipality feels the effects of the loss of productivity, participation and potential as a result of homelessness and housing stress, encompassing:

- Loss of employment and civic participation, poorer training and education outcomes, and increasing social disadvantage;
- Impacts on children – moving frequently develops patterns of vulnerability in later life as well as having poor health and educational outcomes in the present;
- Increasing costs in health and other and other human services, emergency services and criminal justice;
- Impacts on economy – residents have less discretionary spending, reduced spending equates to reduced viability of businesses and empty shops in CBD, compounding perceptions of disadvantage; and
- Difficulty in filling key employment roles, such as staffing our new hospital development, as people are reluctant to move to Greater Shepparton, or cannot find appropriate housing, reducing the feasibility of essential services.

The extent and complexity of housing issues in Greater Shepparton is growing every year, bringing greater costs to both individuals and our community.

Government Policy Context

Affordable Housing provision is affected by a range of regulatory and funding levers at both Federal and State levels of government, which can enable or constrain outcomes at the local level (Figure 2).

Investment by Federal and State Governments is critical to bridging the gap between the market and Affordable Housing delivery, to meet the Strategy's Objectives.

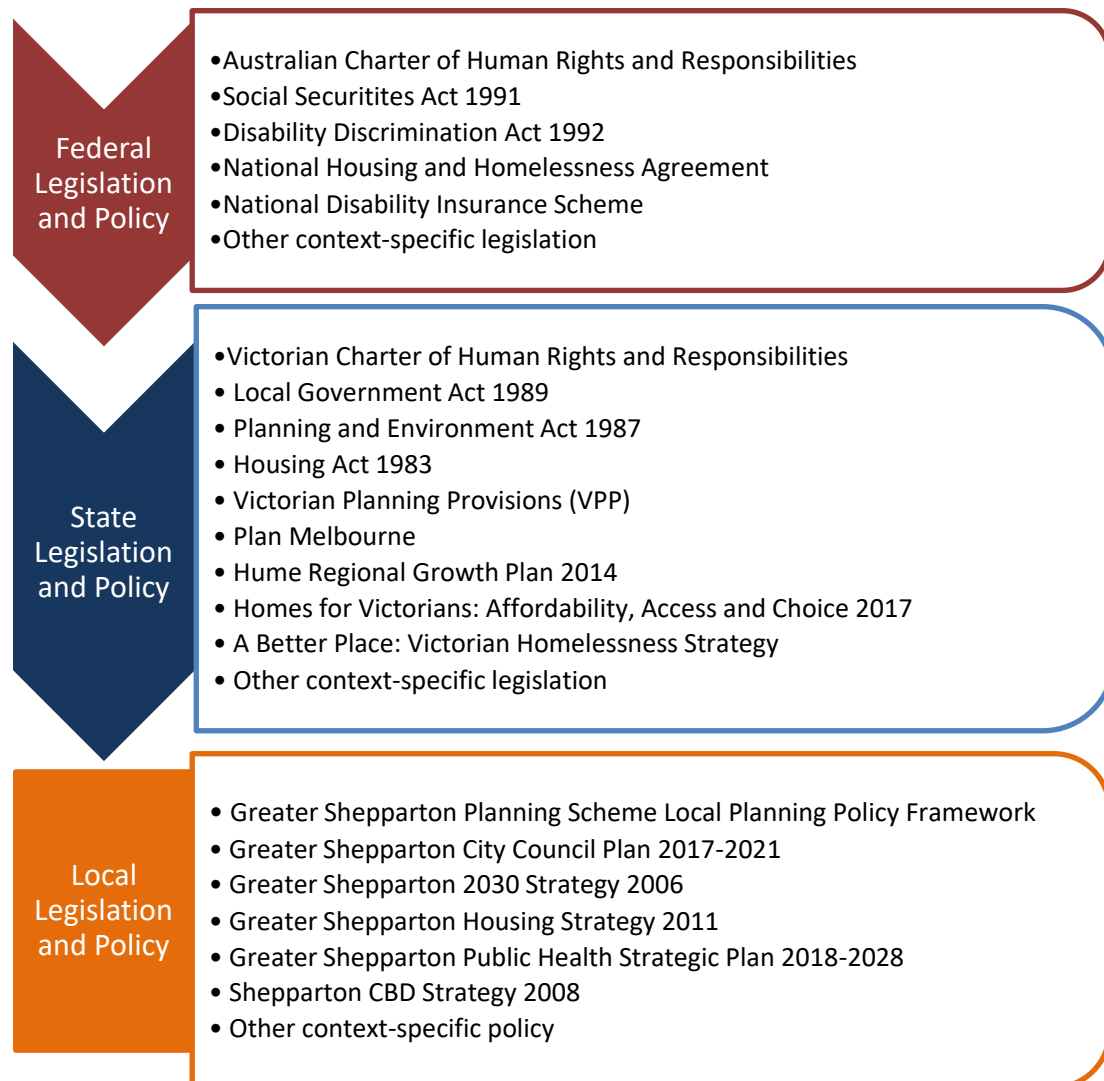


Figure 2: Framework of Federal, state and local legislation and policy that influences Affordable Housing provision.

Federal Government

The Federal Government has jurisdiction over legislation addressing many factors that impact on housing supply and cost, housing need and the delivery of associated services that support low income earners and welfare recipients.

Key federal government investment includes funding to the State under the National Affordable Housing and Homelessness Agreement; direct funding to individuals as Commonwealth Rent Assistance; and low cost low-cost loans, equity investments and grants to local, state and territory governments and Housing Agencies via the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHFIC).

The Federal Government oversees funding for Specialised Disability Accommodation under the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS), and provides the Commonwealth Rent Assistance supplement (CRA) to eligible people renting in the private market or Community Housing.

Recent Federal Government initiatives include the First Home Super Saver Scheme^{xxix} and the First Home Loan Deposit Scheme to support up to 10,000 first home buyer loans each year nationally by guaranteeing up to 20% of a purchase price.^{xx} These programs are not targeted to lower income households or guarantee housing affordability.

State Government

The Victorian State Government implements and oversees a range of taxation, legislative and regulatory policies relating that impact on housing availability, affordability and diversity.

The State is the largest Affordable Housing operator in Victoria with over 64,000 Public Housing dwellings under its control including nearly 1,000 dwellings in Greater Shepparton.^{xxi}

The *Planning and Environment Act 1987* (PAEA) is the primary legislation relating to housing supply and diversity and is administered by Council. Other State legislation that regulates real estate transactions, residential tenancies and building codes can also impact on the cost and delivery of housing.

Two key strategic initiatives, *Homes for Victorians (2017)* and *Plan Melbourne 2017-2050*, set out the State Government's policy and investment commitments in relation to Affordable Housing.

The Victorian Homelessness Strategy 'A Better Place' (2010) aims to deliver a more strategic, targeted and coordinated approach to homelessness, with goals to halve overall homelessness and offer supported accommodation to all rough sleepers who need it by 2020.

Homes for Victorians initiatives include provision of capital and recurrent grant funding and low-cost financing for Registered Housing Agencies, redevelopment of public housing assets; sale of underutilised State Government owned land with an Affordable Housing requirement; investment in Shared Equity Home Ownership; and increased application of planning tools to facilitate Affordable Housing.

Changes to the PAEA in 2018 require Council to consider the facilitation of Affordable Housing when undertaking planning for land use and development. The State Government is supportive of councils seeking to reach agreement to an Affordable Housing inclusion with a landowner as part of the planning amendment and approval process.^{xxii}

What is Council's Role?

Council's core functions are stipulated by the *Local Government Act 1989* with an overarching purpose 'to serve our community through providing leadership, making decisions, and advocating for equitable services and infrastructure', towards a vision in which Greater Shepparton offers 'a thriving economy...with excellent lifestyles, innovative agriculture, a diverse community and abundant opportunities.'^{xxiii}

Council roles focus on:

- Leadership and Advocacy;
- Land-used planner and delivery of housing and local transport associated infrastructure; and
- Facilitator of social and economic outcomes.

Council recognises the remarkable work of existing networks of Registered Housing Providers and not-for-profit organisations who provide services, support and housing to the most vulnerable in our community.

In addition to continuing advocacy to the State and Federal Governments to obtain funding for these agencies, Council delivers several services, support and funding measures that provide direct and indirect assistance to residents in housing need and/or who are on low incomes including:

- Funding allocations for community organisations that provide food, transport, financial counselling, and family violence and addiction recovery programs;
- Funding and resourcing for community facilities and services such as Neighbourhood Houses, Kindergarten and child care places, Community Grants, Sporting Chance Scholarships, Meals on Wheels and food skills education, Word and Mouth youth organisation, a range of low or no cost activities, and 24 hour toilet/shower facilities at Harry Bird Reserve;
- Support for community advocacy for the needs of 'at risk' groups through the Positive Ageing, Disability, and Women's Charter committees;
- Preparation of policies and strategies that identify strategic directions to support public wellbeing, such as the Public Health Strategic Plan 2018-2028, which recognises housing and specifically access to Affordable Housing as one of 12 Liveability Domains, and a key objective for Council.

Council's key capacity to impact housing affordability is through its role as Planning Authority, by ensuring a consistent and appropriate supply of zoned land to meet projected demand for a minimum of 10 years. Requirements for both residential and industrial land supply are assessed every five years, or sooner if required.

Council also provides strategic direction for appropriate housing development through strategies such as the *Greater Shepparton 2030 Strategy 2006*, the *Greater Shepparton Housing Strategy 2011*, and the *Shepparton CBD Strategy 2008*.

These strategic directions are reflected in the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme, which includes:

- Clause 21.04 Settlement, which contains the objective ‘to encourage a variety of housing types, particularly in terms of tenure and price, to contribute to housing diversity and affordability’, and which guides overall development;
- Residential Zones, including the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ), the General Residential Zone (GRZ), and the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ), which regulates use and development on a site by site basis; and
- Provisions that address design and neighbourhood integration requirements.

While Council sets the overarching aims for residential development, it remains reliant on the private market to implement its directives in the construction of housing stock. In recent years, increases in the overall pricing of housing have put even the lower end of the market out of reach for many, even moderate income earners.

In some other jurisdictions, legislation now mandates that a percentage of dwellings within a residential development to be provided as Affordable Housing to return some of the value increase of the land for community benefit, a measure known as ‘inclusionary zoning’. However, this measure has not been implemented in Victoria; the State Government is encouraging Councils to facilitate Affordable Housing in residential development through voluntary agreements with landowners.

As Greater Shepparton’s housing market largely does not experience the high levels of demand and profitability that exist in other localities, opportunities for voluntary measures are minimal but will be pursued where possible.

The *Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy 2020* establishes the strategic justification and means to strengthen the provision of Affordable Housing within the planning scheme, and to maximise Council’s capacity in its role as Planning Authority to respond to Affordable Housing requirements through land-use planning and negotiation with landowners.

Key Challenges

Greater Shepparton faces a range of challenges that will impact the availability and delivery of Affordable Housing, some of which are universal, while others are specific to our municipality. These include:

- Historical underfunding and limited Federal and State Government investment relative to demand, with highly competitive funding processes for housing agencies when available;
- The accumulating scale of housing issues, breadth of cohorts affected, and Council's limited capacity to directly invest or to address causal factors such as underemployment, domestic violence, or rising utility costs, which increase individual need for social housing support;
- No capacity under State legislation for Council to mandate Affordable Housing delivery or dwelling diversity requirements;
- A slower and less profitable housing market than metropolitan Melbourne and other regional centres, reducing the feasibility and desirability of large scale development;
- Culturally embedded preferences for detached houses on large, gardened lots;
- Stigmatisation of those experiencing housing insecurity, which may lead to discrimination in selection of rental tenants;
- Lower profitability limiting the delivery of one and two-bedroom dwellings in the market that are suitable for singles and couples, downsizers, people with disabilities, etc;
- The lengthy duration of the planning, design and construction process for housing stock and the high cost of construction relative to returns on Affordable Housing, which necessitates subsidy or other investment to meet the gap, particularly for housing that supports very low and low income households;
- Constraints on land supply due to high-value agricultural activity, fragmented ownership, and flooding and bushfire risks;
- Predominantly private ownership of land, and subsequent lack of Council capacity to direct supply timing, dwelling diversity, or price setting for rent or purchase;
- Longevity of housing stock, particularly in relation to changes in household size; and
- Cost and timing to deliver infrastructure as residential growth occurs.

Key Opportunities

There are a range of opportunities available to support and promote the provision of Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton.

Some opportunities can support short term action whilst many of the challenges are unlikely to be directly mitigated without other parties' investment and action. Opportunities to build a strong foundation to attract investment and support partners to achieve outcomes are therefore also important.

Key opportunities include:

- Improvements to the exchange and coordination of knowledge and expertise between housing providers, developers and landowners, government agencies, investors, and other interested parties, as well as ongoing consultation and conversation with the community to monitor changing needs and capitalise on emerging ideas and practices;
- Collaboration between stakeholders to develop 'shovel-ready' proposals to strengthen the likelihood of State and Federal funding allocations or alternative investment, and to enable the gathering of necessary resources from complementary sources;
- Collaboration between stakeholders to develop a coordinated advocacy platform for new Federal and State Government investment in crisis, emergency, and Social Housing;
- Delivery of infrastructure to support Affordable Housing outcomes in new residential development through the National Housing Infrastructure Facility (NHIF), and other grant programs;
- Efficient use of currently underutilised assets for Affordable Housing purposes, especially Council- or government-owned land and buildings;
- Pre-emptive planning for former school sites and other sites suitable for adaptive reuse;
- Improving Council's understanding of community infrastructure to enable a 'fine-grain' understanding of appropriate locations, dwelling types and sizes, allocation and requirements for neighbourhood integration as a basis for Planning Scheme ordinance and negotiation with developers and landowners;
- Strengthening of planning provisions to improve housing diversity and facilitate Affordable Housing through the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme. This could include measures to encourage Affordable Housing in growth plans, precinct structure plans and other Council policies and strategies;
- State Government moving to mandatory requirements for Affordable Housing in residential development projects;
- Identified growth corridors already in advanced planning stages, into which provision of Affordable Housing may be incorporated;
- Increasing Council's capacity to negotiate with developers and landowners to encourage Affordable Housing outcomes;
- Capacity to decrease risk by adapting and utilising successful models from other jurisdictions and establishing supporting systems and practices; and
- Bringing together willing community members, organisations, and companies who volunteer services, resources, and knowledge to support Affordable Housing outcomes.

The potential for collaboration and collective action is a critical opportunity and will be required to address shortfalls of Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton.

Council will draw on its established relationships with the following key stakeholders when implementing the Strategy:

- Federal and State Governments; to advocate for critical funding and regulatory inputs;
- Registered Housing agencies; to support applications for funding, to enhance professional networks, and provide ancillary support. The main agencies operating in Greater Shepparton include Beyond Housing, which manages more than 700 Social Housing dwellings across the Goulburn and Ovens Murray region and provides the primary Opening Doors homeless services access point in Greater Shepparton, as well as Aboriginal Housing Victoria (AHV), Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative, Community Housing Limited, Haven Home Safe, and Common Equity Housing Ltd.
- Landowners, developers, and landlords; to develop incentives and mutually beneficial outcomes; and
- Tradespeople, architects and designers, and real estate agents; to increase shared knowledges and promote adaptation and innovation.

How will Council address Affordable Housing need?

The evidence demonstrates the complexity and range of housing needs in Greater Shepparton.

There is not a single solution to the circumstances that can contribute to housing insecurity and demand for Affordable Housing in Greater Shepparton.

Council's core functions are prescribed in the *Local Government Act 1989* and do not include direct housing provision.

In the absence of functional responsibility for housing, Council does not have the human resource or financial capacity funding to undertake significant construction of crisis accommodation at a scale that would impact the extent of current housing need without compromising its legislated functions. Council actions must therefore be targeted within the roles of Council.

Research highlights that taking a 'Housing First' approach provides a framework to direct Council resources such as underutilised land holdings and social capital for maximum community benefit.

The 'Housing First' Approach

'Housing First' provides stable accommodation for people experiencing housing shortage as a starting point, reinstating a degree of control and choice by enabling people to live successfully in a community, and encouraging improvements to health, wellbeing, and social integration, while providing mobile support services in their own homes.

A dwelling becomes the foundation on which the rest of a person's life can be rebuilt, driven by the premise it is easier to focus on solving other problems with a secure roof. Other services are then readily provided, ensuring households have the required supports as they need them.

The model has been implemented successfully in Europe and the USA and is increasingly being adopted across Australia. In Finland, a national 'Housing First' program prioritised buying and building housing through collaboration between government, not-for-profit, and private organisations, supported by an integrated social benefits system, which provides assistance to

maintain tenancy in case of emergency, and free or affordable health care, with at-home support services provided to residents.

Whilst there are several key contextual differences that impact on the direct application of the Finnish model in Greater Shepparton, there are significant learnings with the Housing First approach reducing the complexities of social and external variables to enable focus on the key elements required for provision of dwellings:

- Organisational Capacity
- Land
- Planning Direction, and
- Investment.

Reflecting this framework Council has identified the following areas of focus within the *Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy 2020*:

- Increased Social Housing stock, particularly crisis accommodation, to support households with acute needs;
- Specialised responses to be targeted to households with specific housing needs, through both Social Housing and Affordable Housing models; and
- Increased diversity in size and type of dwellings to suit the range of households.

Ensuring appropriateness of Affordable Housing

The evidence of need identifies that household income capacity is not the only factor that determines the availability of suitable housing.

87% of dwellings in Greater Shepparton are detached houses, with 72% comprising three or more bedrooms, resulting in high demand for other housing types.

For example, in Greater Shepparton there is a substantial shortage of one-bedroom dwellings (3.6% of stock) in comparison to the proportion of single person households (27% of households). Only 16% of housing stock has two bedrooms, while 34% of households comprise two persons (Figure 3).

At the other end of the spectrum 3.4% of stock has more than 5 bedrooms compared to 10% of households with more than 5 people.^{xxiv}

While household size is not directly correlated to dwelling size, these figures suggest that competition will drive higher prices for those likely to be least able to afford higher housing costs, and that issues such as overcrowding may be a result of limited housing diversity.

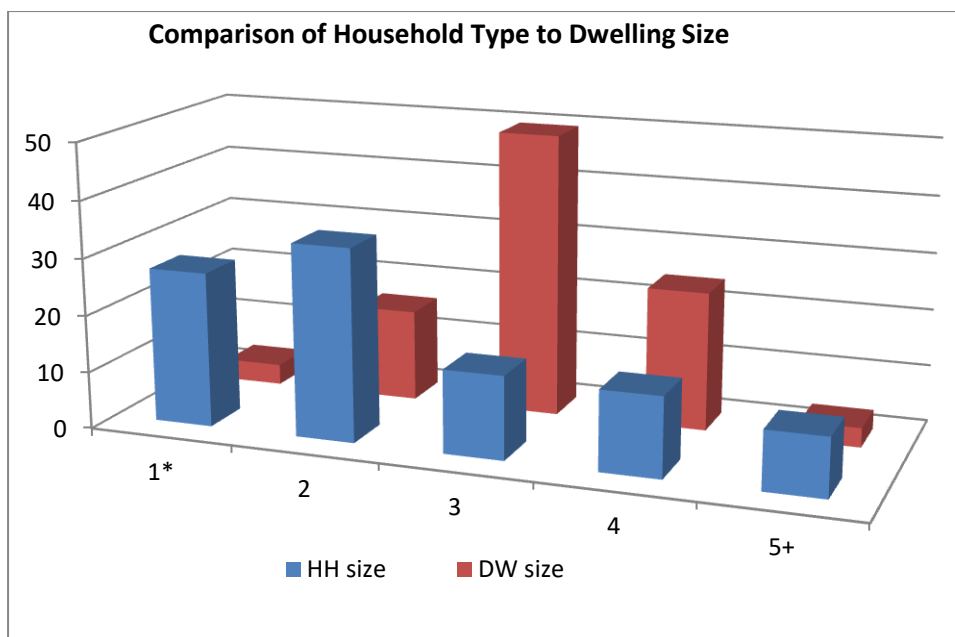


Figure 3: Comparison of household size (HH) to dwelling size (DW)

The physical form of housing may also influence associated costs that determine ongoing affordability, such as transport and utility bills. Housing that is distant from employment opportunities necessitates car ownership, adding thousands in ownership and running costs, and poorly designed or maintained structures can result in considerable costs for heating and cooling.

In response to these considerations, the State Government has established specific criteria, in addition to affordability, to guide the development of dwellings intended for provision as Affordable Housing to ensure dwellings are appropriate for very low, low or moderate income households:

- Allocation – to those in genuine need
- Affordability – in terms of the capacity of a household to pay housing costs
- Longevity – in terms of benefit to the public
- Type – in terms of form and quality
- Location – siting and proximity to amenities, employment and transport
- Integration – in terms of physical build and local community
- Housing need – demonstrated by official estimates.

The application of these criteria in Greater Shepparton is elaborated in the framework set out Table 5 which will provide guidance to direct future development and delivery of Affordable Housing.

While the physical form of Affordable Housing may include 'standard' detached houses that are priced at the lower end of the market, or that are subsidised for sale at below-market cost, alternative models of housing and lifestyle may also be required, including low-medium rise apartments, co-operative housing, cohort-specific housing, affordable private rental, and affordable home ownership, to fulfil both financial and physical aspects of Affordability.

Framework to guide land-use planning and built form outcomes

Criteria	Response and Framework for Action
Location	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepparton and Mooroopna are priority locations for Affordable Housing due to their convenient access to services and amenities. • Other locations in the municipality, including smaller towns and growth areas, may also be suitable for Affordable Housing provision, particularly if there is government owned land available for development. Where possible Affordable Housing should be located close to transport and services. • Government owned land is a priority for Affordable Housing reflecting the opportunity for government leadership and action. This includes current school sites that may eventually become surplus to education needs and available for redevelopment. • Locations within the municipality that are identified as being suitable for growth and for more diverse and particularly smaller dwellings such as flats, duplexes and apartments are priority areas, reflecting the need for more one and two-bedroom dwellings.
Type	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One and two-bedroom dwellings are the priority built-form to meet the priority unmet and forecast Affordable Housing need in Greater Shepparton. • The need for increased 5+bedroom dwellings may be considered on a case-by-case basis in development of residential estates. • Affordable Housing should be built to reflect market standards and measures such as water-sensitive urban design, with consideration to long-term affordability features balanced against upfront capital costs. • Adaptable design should also be incorporated to allow for changing household needs. • Dwelling type may need modifications or alternative design to reflect the needs of a priority group.
Tenure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Both affordable rental and ownership tenures are required to respond to the evidence of need, with emphasis on Social Housing and Affordable Rental Housing for lower income households. • Affordable rental tenures could include housing owned or managed by a Registered Housing Agency (Social Housing) or dwelling managed under an appropriately regulated privately owned Affordable Housing arrangement. It could also include co-housing, shared equity housing, rent-to-buy or other forms of affordable home ownership.
Allocation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clear and accountable process of ensuring any dwellings delivered as Affordable Housing are allocated to households that meet either the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> published Affordable Housing income bands or Social Housing income eligibility is required. • Dwellings proposed for a home purchase arrangement by an individual Eligible Purchaser that are allocated through an appropriately regulated process with an established process of income checking will provide for appropriate allocation. • Priority households for Affordable Housing include single people, ATSI households, women, older people, people with a disability and/or younger

	people.
Affordability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dwellings proposed as Affordable Housing must be clearly intended to be affordable for the proposed household target group. An acceptable benchmark is that very low, low- or moderate-income households should not pay more than 30% of their household income on housing costs. Ownership and/or management by a Registered Housing Agency is expected to ensure this requirement is met.
Longevity of outcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The evidence indicates a forecast need for Affordable Housing. Affordable Housing that is delivered is expected to therefore be intended for long-term use or the value provided re-invested in new Affordable Housing over time should the dwelling be sold. • Affordable Housing should be of sufficient quality to provide positive contribution to the public realm throughout its expected lifespan of 30+ years.
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affordable Housing should not look externally different from market housing and should be equal in design quality and standards. • Integration of Community Housing built form across a site is prioritised, with an objective that Community Housing is not concentrated in any one single location unless supported by a Registered Housing Agency. • Clustering of Affordable Housing dwellings may be appropriate in some circumstances due to proximity to transport and/or availability of land or sites or government redevelopment or investment strategy.

Table 5: Framework to Guide Affordable Housing Built Form and Allocations in Greater Shepparton

SECTION 2 – ACTION PLAN

Vision, Objectives and Measures of Success

The Affordable Housing Strategy has established the strategic basis and evidence for increased action to address unmet and forecast Affordable Housing demand.

The following integrates Council’s vision with the levels of identified need and priority dwelling options:

Vision			
All members of the Greater Shepparton community have access to safe, affordable and appropriate Housing			
Levels of identified need			
Acute	At risk		Potential
Objectives			
1. Increase crisis and specialised housing responses to support vulnerable households	2. Increase Social Housing stock	3. Increase diversity of housing choice, including ‘alternative’ housing and lifestyle typologies.	4. Increase diversity of dwelling size, beginning with one and two bedroom dwellings
Measures of Success			
1. The proportion of the population in acute housing need is decreased from a 2016 baseline of 5.6 persons per 1000.	2. The supply of Affordable Housing (Inc. Social Housing) is increased from a 2016 baseline of 6.1% of all dwellings.	3. The proportion of low income households in housing stress is decreased from a 2016 baseline of 27%.	4. Dwelling supply correlates more closely with distribution of household size. <i>(The supply of one and two bedroom dwellings is increased from a 2016 baseline of 18.6% of all dwellings.)</i>

Figure 4: Affordable Housing vision, levels of identified need, objectives, and measures of success

The Action Plan focuses on addressing these objectives by way of Organisational Capacity, Land, Planning Direction, and Investment.

Monitoring and Review

Implementation of the strategy will be monitored annually by Council, in conjunction with the Affordable Housing Reference Group.

The Strategy will be reviewed in 2027, when updated Census data becomes available.

Action Plan

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY		
Action:	Timeframe:	Objective:
C. 1 Establish an Affordable Housing Reference Group <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To build understanding and trust and facilitate collaborative partnerships between Council and key stakeholders. To support knowledge sharing and collective action. To support Council in the refinement and delivery of agreed actions. 		
C 1.1 Establish Terms of Reference and confirm resourcing to support the Reference Group establishment and ongoing activities. Undertake a process to appoint organisational, community and Council representatives.	Short	All
C 1.2 Engage with specialised housing services and explore options for Council to assist in expansion of existing Affordable Housing delivery and support programs.	Ongoing	
C 1.3 Support the Reference Group to provide timely and informed advice to Council on the delivery of the actions set out in the Strategy, and particularly in regard to facilitating targeted responses to identified vulnerable cohorts.	Ongoing	
C. 2 Support community understanding, engagement and support for Affordable Housing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support ongoing engagement with the community, to share information, provide updates, and receive suggestions and feedback on delivery of actions To facilitate sharing of resources and knowledge, and increase awareness of potential actions and resource requirements 		
C 2.1 Establish a Council website portal to promote the Affordable Housing Strategy objectives and actions, facilitate ongoing conversations with the community, and link people to State and Housing Agency Affordable Housing programs.	Short	All
C 2.2 Incorporate housing related events into Council's calendar of events for promotion.	Short	
C 2.3 Investigate 'alternative' housing and lifestyle models, and explore opportunities to showcase different housing typologies to the public, broadening the local knowledge base regarding housing options. Including models that decrease environmental impacts and reduce ongoing housing costs.	Ongoing	3

C.3 Build capacity of Council staff to implement the strategy and support Affordable Housing outcomes

- To ensure Council has the skills and procedures in place to implement the Strategy.

C 3.1 Provide training and support for Council's planning offices to implement Affordable Housing objectives in new Structure Plans and to negotiate Affordable Housing outcomes in nominated planning and development circumstances.	Short	All
C 3.2 Reflect Affordable Housing objectives in updated or new Council policies and strategies	Ongoing	

DRAFT

LAND		
Action:	Timeframe:	Objective:
L. 1 Build on the Framework to Identify opportunity areas for Affordable Housing delivery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To support Affordable Housing being located in areas close to services and facilities. To prioritise delivery of future infrastructure requirements. 		
L 1.1 Undertake Community Infrastructure Mapping to identify existing community resources and needs and areas of gaps and priorities for Affordable Housing.	Short	All
L1.2 Develop localised guidelines to support the facilitation of Affordable Housing in appropriate locations, such as the CBD, and in proximity to Goulburn Valley Health.	Short-medium	All
L. 2 Identify and assess potential of government assets for development as Affordable Housing (including crisis housing, specialised housing, Social Housing and/or transportable (short-term) homes) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To determine opportunities to maximise the use of Council land assets to achieve new Affordable Housing supply for priority households. To identify specific site opportunities to advocate for Federal and/or State Government investment and provide a focus for partnerships. 		
L 2.1 Conduct an audit of Council owned assets to identify potential Council land holdings, underutilised buildings and air-right opportunities (i.e. above car parking) to determine sites that may be suitable for Affordable Housing purposes.	Short-Medium	1 & 2
L 2.2 Undertake feasibility studies of shortlisted Council assets identified at 2.1 to assess and determine potential development opportunities and housing outcomes, suitability for different household groups, and delivery and partnership options. (Utilising mapping created under Action L. 1.)	Short - Medium	
L 2.3 Work with the Affordable Housing Reference Group to progress the delivery of agreed Council sites nominated for Affordable Housing, including advocacy for Federal and/or State funding.	Short - Medium	
L 2.4 Advocate for utilisation of State and/or Federal government owned assets in Greater Shepparton for Affordable Housing purposes, including revitalisation of underutilised, poor quality, or ageing social housing assets, and appropriate development of repurposed sites, such as former school locations.	Ongoing	
L 2.5 Support the development of applications for development of existing Social Housing sites that encourage housing diversity, integration, and an increase of Social Housing stock.	Ongoing	

PLANNING DIRECTION

Action:	Timeframe:	Objective:
<p>P. 1 Strengthen the Greater Shepparton Planning Scheme to incorporate clear objectives and strategies to facilitate Affordable Housing and pursue opportunities to incorporate Affordable Housing outcomes in residential projects</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To respond to objectives of the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> that require Council to facilitate the provision of Affordable Housing through land-use planning and development. To ensure the Planning Scheme reflects current evidence and policies. To support Council to incorporate Affordable Housing objectives and outcomes in areas identified for residential development. To strengthen Council's ability to engage with developers and landowners to achieve Affordable Housing outcomes through agreement. 		
P 1.1 Develop an Affordable Housing Negotiation framework and explore opportunities to incentivise agreement, supportive partnerships, and delivery of Affordable Housing with the private sector.	Short	2
P 1.2 Implement localised development guidelines within the Shepparton South East Precinct Structure Plan and new growth areas to support housing affordability and diversity.	Short-medium	2, 3 & 4
P 1.3 Prepare a planning scheme amendment to implement provisions that reflect the findings and recommendations of the Strategy.	Medium	
P 1.4 Continue to facilitate planning for new growth areas and encourage housing diversity and affordability through inclusion of smaller lots.	Ongoing	
P 1.5 Advocate to the State Government to improve planning system capacity to implement Affordable Housing outcomes, including the implementation of inclusionary zoning at appropriate proportions.	Ongoing	

INVESTMENT		
Action:	Timeframe:	Objective:
F. 1 Advocate for Federal, State and private investment in Affordable Housing and related housing infrastructure in Greater Shepparton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To attract new investment to support the delivery of Affordable Housing. • To attract new investment to ensure the timely provision of infrastructure, facilities, amenity and services to support residents. 		
F 1.1 In conjunction with the Reference Group, develop a coordinated advocacy platform to seek State and Federal Government funding for Affordable Housing (including crisis, supported and Social Housing).	Short	All
F 1.2 Examine the potential to access the National Housing Infrastructure Fund and other grant programs to support the provision of infrastructure and Affordable Housing in new developments.	Short	
F 1.3 Advocate to State and Federal Governments for improved public transport and other services, and funding for community infrastructure.	Ongoing	
F 1.4 Engage with potential impact investors, social enterprises, and philanthropic organisations to explore opportunities for investment.	Ongoing	
F. 2 Investigate opportunities to enhance and increase Council’s investment and allocation of resources <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To enhance existing Affordable Housing resources. • To consider opportunities for direct Council investment. 		
F 2.1 Investigate options for Council to provide assistance to encourage improvements in supply of Affordable Housing stock, such as grants for repairs and/or improvements to existing poor-quality stock, provision of high-efficiency utilities, and/or incentives for privately owned affordable rentals.	Short	All
F 2.2 Explore opportunities for Council investment to support improvements to public spaces in areas with concentrations of Affordable Housing. Projects could include improvements to local parks, local tree-planting days, mural painting projects, community gardens, garden maintenance programs.	Ongoing	
F 2.3 Investigate options to minimise stigmatisation of Affordable Housing through measures such as providing streetscaping and landscaping, and subsidised access to Council services.	Ongoing	

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Frequently Asked Questions

What is the difference between Social Housing and Affordable Housing?

Social housing is for people in our community with low to very low incomes who experience housing stress and who also experience disadvantage or challenges in participating in the private market. Many of these people have recently experienced homelessness, family violence or have special needs and some may just have a low income such as aged pensioners, families, students or very low income earners. Social Housing is owned and/or managed by the State Government or by a Registered Housing Agency with dwellings rented to households that are registered on the Victorian Housing Register.

Affordable Housing includes a broader range of housing responses that are appropriate to the needs of low, very low and moderate income households as defined by the PAEA. Affordable Housing includes, but is not limited to, Social Housing and can include dwellings that are available for rent or purchase. Affordable Housing programs include dwellings that are sold at the lower end of the market prices, alternative housing forms, and alternative ownership models such as cohousing.

How do Social Housing and Affordable Housing differ from other housing?

Social Housing and Affordable Housing looks just like other homes in your neighbourhood. The differences are in how they are managed and financed and the process of allocation.

Why is Social Housing important for Greater Shepparton?

Social Housing provides critical support for people in our community who experience circumstances that make acquiring and keeping homes difficult under the current market-based system. These circumstances can arise through an array of societal impacts that are beyond personal control, which often combine to create very complex problems. Lack of housing can bring about a host of concomitant issues that are more expensive to address than providing housing.

Will my property value be affected by having Social Housing in my neighbourhood?

For most homeowners, their home is their biggest asset. It is natural to be concerned about the potential for an effect on the value of your home as a result of changes in your neighbourhood.

There is evidence from a number of studies that shows that property values are not detrimentally affected by having Social or Affordable Housing nearby.^{xxv}

Will my safety be affected by having Social Housing in my neighbourhood?

There is no evidence supporting a link between Social Housing and increased crime. The vast majority of people living in Social Housing were already living in our community and have simply fallen on hard times.

Appendix 2 – Examples of Alternative Housing and Lifestyle Models

Beddown

Brisbane, Australia



Figure 5: Beddown's Brisbane operation

Charity group Beddown have launched a mission to utilise 'spaces that are commonly used and busy during the day but at night are left vacant or empty' to provide safe and secure shelter and a comfortable bed for people who are rough sleeping.

Fear of being attacked or robbed is a significant factor in the harsh reality of homelessness. Sleep deprivation as contribute to many of the flow-on effects of homelessness, including depression, diabetes, hypertension, obesity, memory loss, and impaired cognitive function which may lead to substance abuse.

In March 2019, a two-week trial in Brisbane saw more than 40 guests use the accommodations provided, beginning an ongoing program, with rollout to Sydney underway anticipated in 2020. The organisation receives no government funding relying on public and corporate donations.

Access to additional services and resources is also offered, including doctors, nurses, dentists, hairdressers, laundry and shower facilities, food and clothing, through the support of corporate sponsors. Volunteers set up beds, watch over guests as they sleep, and pack beds up in the morning. Each bed comes complete with eye-mask, earplugs and a chocolate on the pillow, to enhance the sense of dignity and respect imparted to guests.

<https://beddown.org.au/>

Harris Transportable Housing Project

Melbourne, Australia



Figure 6: Harris Transportable Housing, Melbourne

The first six of 57 proposed transportable housing units in Melbourne's inner western suburbs were occupied in August 2019.

The FREDi.e units, designed by Schored Projects, offer open plan living and sleeping, a kitchenette and bathroom, with mezzanine storage, private courtyard and balcony, and environmental features such as solar hot water and passive heating/cooling that reduce ongoing costs for tenants. They are securely positioned on high strength steel footings.

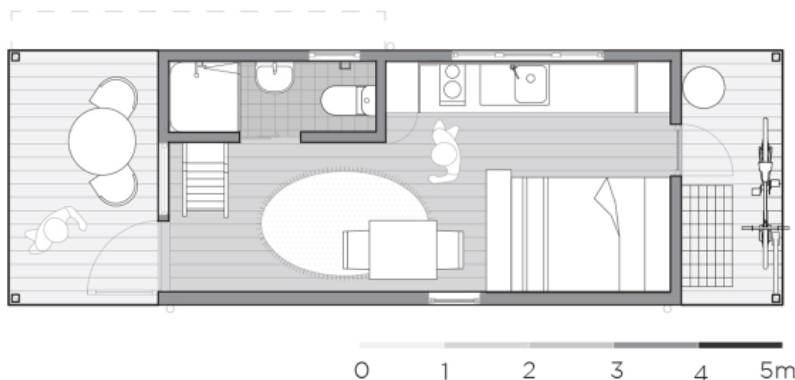


Figure 7: Plan of the FREDi.e units, designed by Schored Projects

The land is owned by VicRoads and reserved for a future road-widening, but in the meantime has been leased to Launch Housing for five years at a nominal rent. VicRoads is required to give 12 months' notice if it needs the land, at which time the units can be crane-lifted to another site. They have an expected lifespan of 50 years, and have been fitted out specifically to suit the needs of people who have experienced long-term homelessness. The nine sites will allow for different configurations, to suit varying needs and enable residents with larger pets to retain their companions.

The Harris Transportable Housing project is a collaboration between Launch Housing, VicRoads, Schored Projects, DHHS, Oscar Building (construction of the units), Hansen Yuncken (transportation & installation), Victorian Property Fund (\$3 million in funding), and Harris Capital, a philanthropic foundation whose donation of \$4 million made the project feasible.

A base model unit could be set in Shepparton for approximately \$92,000 (as at 2019), subject to land availability.

<https://www.launchhousing.org.au/harris-transportable-housing-project/>

Murundaka Cohousing Community

Melbourne, Australia



Figure 8: Communal back garden at Murundaka, Heidelberg Heights

Cohousing is a model that varies in physical form, but which emphasises intentional design, social interaction and environmental sustainability. Cohousing communities are based around sharing everyday tasks, such as cooking and gardening, and sharing living spaces that are tailored to the needs of the residents, encompassing gardens, entertainment areas, guest facilities, hobby rooms; residents have their own self-contained, private dwellings as well as facilities they may not be able to afford on their own.

Murundaka Cohousing Community, in Heidelberg Heights, had its roots in a housing co-operative, growing to encompass 18 households in a purpose-built 3 storey complex ranged around a large productive garden.

<https://www.murundakacohousing.org.au/>

Nightingale Housing

Brunswick, Melbourne



Figure 9: Nightingale 1, Brunswick

The Nightingale Housing delivers multi-residential housing that is environmentally sustainable, financially affordable and socially inclusive, utilising a set of systems and processes that have been refined over 11 projects.

Each medium-rise apartment building provides communal outdoor spaces, productive gardens, shared laundry facilities that maximise individual space within dwellings and lower construction costs, car sharing and abundant bicycle parking, and active retail interfaces with the street. Designed by architects, investor profits are capped at 15%, and resident groups are balloted prior to construction commencing, to minimise risk and maximise benefit to all parties.

<https://nightingalehousing.org/>

End Notes

ⁱ ABS

ⁱⁱ The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) understands 'homelessness' as 'home'lessness, not 'roof'lessness. The statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4922.0Main%20Features22012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4922.0&issue=2012&num=&view=>)

ⁱⁱⁱ ABS

^{iv} Department of Health and Human Services (2019) Rental Report, time series,

^v Assuming cost to Government of \$250,000 per dwelling.

^{vi} Nepal, B., Tanton, R. & Harding, A. 2010, 'Measuring Housing Stress: How Much do Definitions Matter?', Urban Policy and Research, Vol. 28, No. 2, p. 211-24. *Planning and Environment Act 1987*

^{viii} Victoria Government Gazette 6 June 2019)

^{ix} The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) understands 'homelessness' as 'home'lessness, not 'roof'lessness. The statistical definition states that when a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

(<https://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/Latestproducts/4922.0Main%20Features22012?opendocument&tabname=Summary&prodno=4922.0&issue=2012&num=&view=>)

^A SGS Economics and Planning

^{xi} Australian Human Rights Commission (2019) <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/age-discrimination/projects/risk-homelessness-older-women>

^{xii} Data provided by homeless service agencies and combined by Affordable Development Outcomes

^{xiii} Aboriginal Housing Victoria, Victorian Aboriginal Housing and Homelessness Summit - Documents and Background Papers, 2019. Available at:

<https://ahvic.org.au/communications-and-resources/vahhf>

^{xiv} Data provided by agencies and combined by Affordable Development Outcomes.

^{xv} Smith & Hetherington 2016, <https://www.olderrentals.org.au/content/the-adequacy-the-age-pension-australia-assessment-pensioner-living-standards>

^{xvi} ID Consulting (2019)

^{xvii} Wiesel, I. and Habibis, D. (2015) NDIS, housing assistance and choice and control for people with disability, AHURI Final Report 258, Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, Melbourne

^{xviii} ID Consulting (2019)

^{xix} <https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals/super/withdrawing-and-using-your-super/first-home-super-saver-scheme/>

^{xx} <https://www.liberal.org.au/latest-news/2019/05/12/helping-australians-buy-their-first-home>

^{xxi} DHHS (2016) Housing assistance additional service delivery data 2018/19

^{xxii} Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (2019), Planning Mechanisms for Affordable Housing, version dated 30/5/19

^{xxiii} Council Plan 2017-2021, p. 2.

^{xxiv} ID Consulting (2019) Community Profile

^{xxv} [http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Final_report_version_4_Sep09_\(3\).pdf](http://www.portphillip.vic.gov.au/Final_report_version_4_Sep09_(3).pdf)