



**GREATER SHEPPARTON AFFORDABLE
HOUSING REFERENCE GROUP**

2022-2023
**ANNUAL
REPORT**

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Chair's Report

This is the first report of the Affordable Housing Reference Group (AHRG). The AHRG was formed in an advisory capacity to Greater Shepparton City Council (Council), on the application and implementation of the *Greater Shepparton City Council Affordable Housing Strategy, Houses for People*, April 2020.

The AHRG is guided by Terms of Reference, with a focus on how Council can support and increase the quantity and quality of Affordable Housing within the municipality. The AHRG endeavours to facilitate this through seven key areas of focus, including:

- Build understanding and trust and facilitate collaborative partnerships between Council and key stakeholders
- Support knowledge sharing and collective action
- Support Council in the refinement and delivery of agreed actions.

Since its inception the AHRG have come together regularly with the support of Council officers. The AHRG listened and talked to experts to understand the challenges and barriers facing the affordable housing and development market. The group reviewed options and solutions being trialled and implemented across Victoria in response to this complex problem, and how community perceptions impact the delivery of affordable housing. The AHRG also considered how the benefits of affordable housing can be promoted, and the barriers and opportunities that exist in the Shepparton region regarding the delivery of affordable housing.

The AHRG recognise that it will take a wide variety of approaches to tackle the dire housing affordability challenge faced in the Shepparton region, and that Council has a responsibility to play a leading role in promoting and facilitating affordable housing solutions for its local community.

The AHRG membership comprises of local organisations and community members who are passionate about finding solutions to Shepparton's housing affordability problem. I would like to thank and acknowledge all members for their commitment and robust contribution to this wicked challenge.



Michael Dechepper – Affordable Housing Reference Group Chair



Membership

The Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Reference Group formed in early 2021, with first meeting on 29 March 2021

Inaugural members

Membership	Primary Voting Member
Greater Shepparton City Council	(Former Mayor) Kim O’Keeffe
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Kristy Cooper
Beyond Housing	Celia Adams
Wintringham Housing Limited	Michael Deschepper
The Bridge Youth Services	Melinda Lawley
St Vincent de Paul Society	Frank Purcell
Community Member	Tania Tonks
Community Member	Rebecca Lorains
Community Member	Bruce Mactier

Appointment of Community Members in 2023 (commenced June 2023)

Tania Tonks (reappointed)
Terry Court
Kathleen Mills
Denise Moseley

Current Membership

Membership	Primary Voting Member
Wintringham Housing Limited	Michael Deschepper (Chairperson)
Beyond Housing	Celia Adams
Committee for Greater Shepparton	Linda Nieuwenhuizen
Community Representatives	Tania Tonks (Deputy Chairperson) Denise Moseley Kathleen Mills Terry Court
Department of Families, Fairness and Housing	Lana Young
Ethnic Council of Shepparton & District Inc.	Sam Atukorala
Greater Shepparton City Council	Cr Seema Abdullah Cr Sam Spinks
Greater Shepparton Foundation	Amanda McCulloch
Primary Care Connect	Tricia Quibell
Rumbalara Aboriginal Cooperative	Carol Cann
Shepparton Chamber of Commerce and Industry	Michaela Sargeant
The Bridge Youth Services	Melinda Lawley
The Salvation Army	Omeni Ndlovu
VincentCare	Lilly Fairly

Activities / outcomes

Committee briefing on the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build and how Council will promote / support projects by making available underutilised Council owned land (Aug 2021).

Committee briefing on the Council facilitated Greenfield Lot Working Group which has an objective to investigate measures to address barriers in developing affordable housing in greenfield locations (Aug 2021).

The Committee wrote to Council outlining that, considering the ambitious targets outlined in the Affordable Housing Strategy and the Council Plan, Council should provide adequate support and resources for the Council Strategic Planning Team (April 2022).

The Committee wrote to Council recommending that Council support a proposal to lease land at 4 Deane Court Shepparton for a community housing project (April 2022).

Committee briefing on progress by Council to make available residential land in the Shepparton South East Precinct (April 2022).

The Committee considered the impact of the Maude / Nixon community consultation process and Council's subsequent decision to not support the social housing project that was proposed for the site, noting the outcome may discourage other community housing organisations from scoping and submitting project proposals (July 2022).

Committee briefing by Haven Home Safe of successful 'at-scale' affordable and social housing projects undertaken in the City of Greater Bendigo and what learnings can be applied to Shepparton (Aug 2022).

Council briefed the Committee on the Council facilitated Affordable Housing Roundtable and learnings that can be applied to promote future affordable and social housing projects (Aug 2022)

Committee briefing on the audit undertaken by Council officers (and a subsequent decision by Councillors) regarding Council owned land that can be made available for affordable and social housing (Oct 2022).

Committee briefing by the Homes Victoria Local Government Partnerships team noting Big Housing Build and other government initiatives (March 2023).

Future Homes Initiative – Committee briefing by Victorian Government (Office of Government Architect and Department of Transport and Planning) (April 2023); the Future Homes initiative has been subsequently introduced into the Greater Shepparton planning scheme.

The Committee wrote to Council recommending that Council should require an affordable housing component as part of a broader development of 45 Parkside Drive, Shepparton (June 2023).

The Committee provided Council officers with housing data and statistics to support Council advocacy to the State government in response to the Commonwealth Games cancellation announcement (July 2023).

The Committee wrote to Councillors to strongly support and endorse the proposal to utilise the Rowe and High Street Car Park site to increase the availability of affordable housing. The AHRG recommended that Council continue to actively pursue such an outcome as it aligns with Council endorsed strategic documents and policies and responds to the significant need for affordable housing (July 2023).

The Committee introduced Council officers to CHIA Vic (Victoria's community housing peak body) to allow Council to create a protocol with CHIA Vic, to provide a conduit for developers / investors to identify community housing providers when they are seeking partners to help deliver more social or affordable housing in the region (Sept 2023).

Presentation to the Committee from Jane Macey – Principal Planner – Spiire; Local development trends, challenges and opportunities that may impact the affordable and social housing space (Oct 2023).

Victorian Housing Statement – Committee briefing on the recently released VHS, with specific consideration on how the Future Homes Initiative can be promoted within the Shepparton region (Oct 2023).

Development of a publicly available, centrally located set of data that can be used by anyone with an interest in advocating for affordable and social housing in the Shepparton region; dataset has been created and will be hosted on the Council website with the support of Council officers (Oct 2023).

Committee briefing from Council Economic Development Team (Nov 2023) about what this teams' role and function is within Council to provide an understanding how it contributes towards Greater Shepparton's growth.

Work-in-progress

Review of the Greater Shepparton Affordable Housing Strategy with recommendation to Council to refine the definition of Integration within the Framework to guide land-use planning and built form outcomes (Nov 2023).

Committee is working with Council officers to develop a strategy to improve community awareness regarding affordable and social housing.

Committee is considering the best way to promote affordable and social housing opportunities to local developers, with regard to both land availability and promotion of higher density developments.



Achievements

There has been affordable housing projects completed in the last two years throughout Shepparton. Some of these are shown in photos within this report.

Council has received an increase in permit applications including rooming housing and community care accommodations in Shepparton and Tatura.

There has also been an increase in the number of enquiries for this type of development by housing providers throughout greater Shepparton with anticipation of further planning permit applications.

Council has been working with Kid Under Cover to provide land under a long term lease for accommodation.

Investigations are being undertaken on a Council owned carpark at High and Rowe street to inform an expressions of interest process with the hope housing providers will develop affordable housing.





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