

# DRAFT AFFORDABLE HOUSING POLICY STATEMENT

## SUMMARY

**The Draft Affordable Housing Policy Statement has been developed to guide Council's ongoing efforts to increase the supply of affordable housing in Hobsons Bay. It updates Council's *Affordable Housing Policy Statement 2016*.**

### **What is affordable housing?**

Affordable housing is defined in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as 'housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households'.<sup>1</sup>

Council's Draft Policy Statement will focus primarily on the following types of affordable housing:

- **Social housing** - rental housing suitable for the needs of households on the Victorian Housing Register.
- **Affordable rental housing** – rental housing that is suitable for the needs of primarily moderate-income households.
- **Affordable purchase housing** - housing available for purchase that is suitable for the needs of primarily moderate-income households.

### **What is the need in Hobsons Bay?**

There is an urgent need for affordable housing to support households on very low, low and moderate incomes in Hobsons Bay. Research estimates there is a current shortfall of more than 1,400 affordable housing dwellings in Hobsons Bay with the greatest unmet demand amongst very low income and single adult households.

Housing is recognised as a human right in the Universal Declaration of Human

Rights. Research indicates that adequate housing protects and promotes physical and mental health and wellbeing, while inadequate or precarious housing can be harmful for individuals, families and communities. Housing is therefore an important factor in the promotion of public health and wellbeing, which is a key function of Council as per the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008*.

### **What is the role of Council?**

The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments set the key legislative, policy and funding frameworks for housing markets and affordable housing. Local government typically plays a more limited role, primarily focused on advocacy and negotiating contributions through the planning system.

For more than 20 years, Hobsons Bay City Council has taken a more proactive approach, dating back to the adoption of the Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy in 2002. More recently, Council's efforts have been guided by the Affordable Housing Policy Statement 2016, leading to the establishment of the Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust and consideration of Council-owned assets for affordable housing projects.

### **What is included in the Draft Policy Statement?**

The Draft Policy Statement is built around six Action Areas that have been adapted and updated from the 2016 Policy Statement:

1. Advocacy and Leadership
2. Land use planning
3. Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust
4. Use of government-owned assets
5. Community awareness and understanding
6. Supporting at risk residents

<sup>1</sup> Annual income ranges are published each year by the Victorian Government. In 2023-24, for example, a very low income household is defined as follows: single adult (up to \$29,770), couples (up to \$44,650), family and dependent children (up to \$62,510).



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Each action area includes a series of commitments that provide further direction as to how Council will work towards the aims of the Draft Policy Statement. All commitments respond to ongoing and emerging issues and are aligned to Council's current approach and the broader policy, legislative and funding contexts. Several commitments have been carried forward from the 2016 Policy Statement, while others have been updated or added.

## What are the key changes from the 2016 Policy Statement?

The key changes proposed through the Draft Policy Statement include:

- **Advocacy** – clarifies support for new statewide planning provisions for mandatory affordable housing contributions on some planning permit applications and amendments.
- **Supporting negotiations** – clarifies the level of contribution Council will seek when negotiating for affordable housing contributions on rezoning and planning permit applications for larger development sites.
- **Planning incentives** – updates Council's commitment to explore incentives to encourage more affordable housing contributions through the planning system.
- **Building the Trust** – introduces a commitment to identify incentives to encourage developers and landowners to use the Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust to deliver contributions.
- **Council-owned assets** – re-affirms Council's commitment to consider affordable housing as one of the outcomes when assessing Council-owned assets as part of the delivery of Council's Property Strategy 2021.
- **Supporting 'at risk' residents** – introduces a commitment to develop

consistent and coordinated processes to support vulnerable residents to access services, and for Council to continue supporting and facilitating connections between support organisations.

- **Investigating rates concessions** – introduces a commitment to investigate rates concessions for properties owned or managed by the Hobsons Bay Affordable Housing Trust.

## How can I provide my feedback?

Council is seeking feedback on the Draft Affordable Housing Policy Statement from Monday 17 July until Monday 28 August 2023. To view the Draft Policy Statement and provide your feedback please visit <https://participate.hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au/affordablehousing>

If you have any questions or need more information, please contact Council's Social and Strategic Planning Team at [socialplanning@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au](mailto:socialplanning@hobsonsbay.vic.gov.au) or by calling 1300 179 944.

## What happens next?

After the consultation process ends, all feedback will be considered, and an updated policy statement will be presented to Council for consideration and adoption later in 2023.



**HOBSONS BAY  
LANGUAGE LINE**

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