

## 1.0 PURPOSE

This Statement seeks to outline Council's strategic response in regard to affordable housing issues in the City of Yarra.

The purpose of the Affordable Housing Statement and Strategy is to:

1. *articulate Council's commitment to affordable housing, recognising the social, economic and cultural benefits it generates within the municipality;*
2. *provide a framework for Council's role and action plan in achieving stated goals of supporting affordable housing within the municipality; and*
3. *complement and link to other Council strategies that relate to affordable housing.*

## 2.0 CONTEXT

Council recognises through the Housing Statement that its role to support affordable housing is influenced by the responsibilities of other levels of government, limitations on Council's financial and legal capacity to directly intervene in the housing development market, and the role of local community housing providers. The historical role of this Council has been to support and advocate for affordable housing, but not as a direct provider of housing stock.

The maintenance of a range of affordable housing options is a key factor in maintaining the diversity of this City. The affordable housing sector ensures that low income, different household types and people experiencing disadvantage live and contribute to the vitality and rich diversity of the City.

## 2.1 A proud history

This municipality has a strong history in affordable housing issues: Yarra has been the home to close knit working class neighbourhoods 'doing it hard' in good and bad times and home to successive waves of new migrants. People with complex needs have been drawn to the area by the range of local support services. The 'slums' of the late 19th Century provided affordable private rental and home ownership to a range of people and families.

The City of Yarra has affordable housing opportunities existing alongside more affluent households. This creates neighbourhoods of difference and vitality. The legacy of this is a City of community diversity, tolerance and cohesion.

Council has expressed its ongoing support for a strong social housing sector and affordable private market in order to maintain its diverse community via a number of mechanisms. The policy statements that support this approach include the *Municipal Strategic Statement*, the *1998 City of Yarra Affordable Housing Statement* and the *1999 Affordable Housing Statement and Strategies*. These documents, in conjunction with the outcome of research and community consultation, have led to the development of the Affordable Housing Statement 2004/08 and Strategy 2004/06.



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## 2.2 Housing need

The City of Yarra is characterised by high demand for affordable housing, including crisis, transitional and long-term accommodation. This demand is indicated through the following measures:

1. public housing waiting lists have an “indefinite” waiting time, as long as 8 years in some areas of the municipality;<sup>1</sup>
2. primary homelessness in Yarra is approximately 6 times the Melbourne Metropolitan average<sup>2</sup>;
3. private rental accommodation categorised as “affordable”, comprises less than 1 per cent of the total rental pool<sup>3</sup>; and
4. Yarra has lost approximately 50% of its private rooming house stock in the past decade<sup>4</sup>.
5. lack of diversity in affordable housing stock resulting in a mis-match between stock/ allocation policy and demographic demand.

## 2.3 Housing stock

Over the past fifteen years, the City of Yarra has experienced significant changes to its housing base. These changes have come about as a result of increased demand for inner city properties, associated medium density redevelopment, warehouse conversions and transformation of low cost rental stock to private home ownership.

In light of the high demand for inner-city affordable housing, the City of Yarra is fortunate to have a *relatively* strong affordable housing sector. This is reflected by:

1. the highest proportion of public housing stock in a metropolitan area;
2. a large range of community housing programs, such as rooming houses, group houses and supported residential programs;

<sup>1</sup> <http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ooh/oohninte.nsf/frameset/Ooh?Opendocument>; (Public Housing Waiting and Transfer Lists) December 2003

<sup>2</sup>The City of Yarra Homelessness Services Study, Thompson Goodall Associates, 2003

<sup>3</sup><http://hnb.dhs.vic.gov.au/ooh/oohninte.nsf/frameset/Ooh?Opendocument> (Victoria Rental Report)

<sup>4</sup>Joep, S; On the Threshold- The Future of Private Rooming Houses in Yarra; October 2000.

3. a number of private rooming houses operating for many decades and well recognised within the housing sector; and
4. a range of housing stock to meet the needs of a variety of household types.

## 3.0 A CONSULTATIVE APPROACH

The Affordable Housing Statement and Strategy were developed through a community consultation process which included key stakeholders from sectors such as;

1. Residents and resident representative groups of private and public housing;
2. Housing providers;
3. Community housing developers;
4. Health and welfare services;
5. Homeless people’s representatives;
6. Peak bodies; and
7. Specialist groups (ie youth, indigenous, disability).

The Strategies outlined in this document also reflect a partnership approach. Through working in partnership with the many agencies, residents and relevant stakeholders both within the municipality and wider, Council’s dominant role articulated in this policy statement is one of advocacy and coordination.



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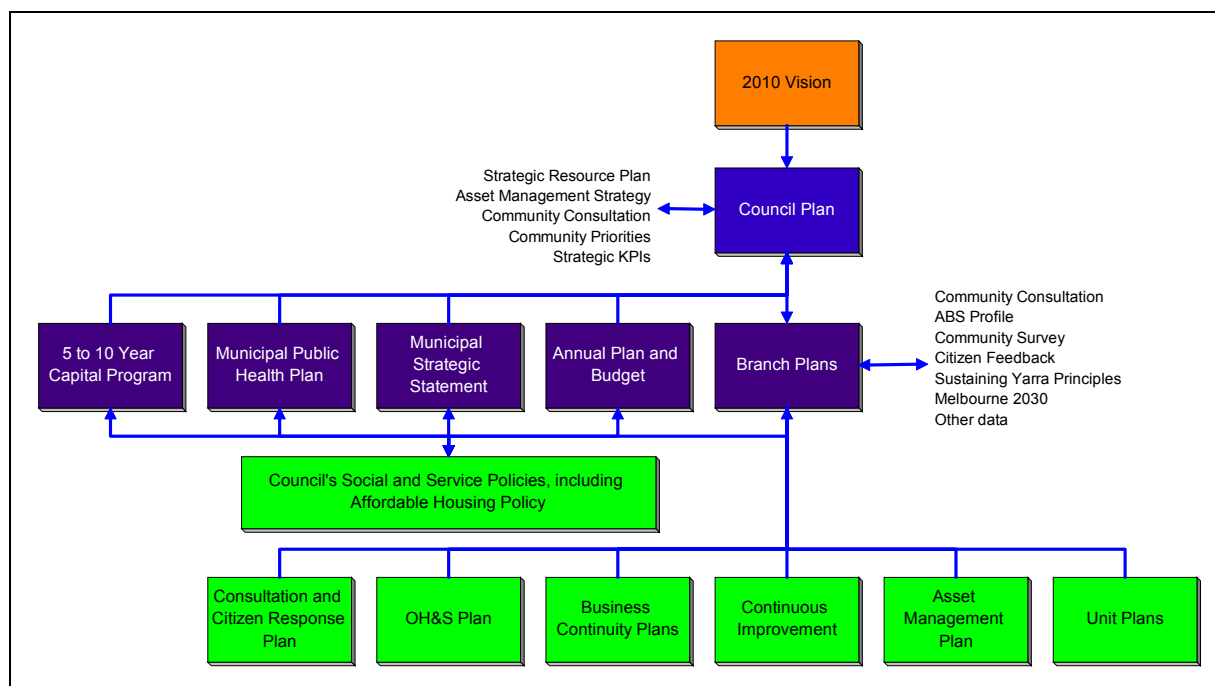
## 4.0 SCOPE

The scope of this Statement and Strategy is to document Council's actions to ensure that affordable housing is supported, retained and developed in Yarra.

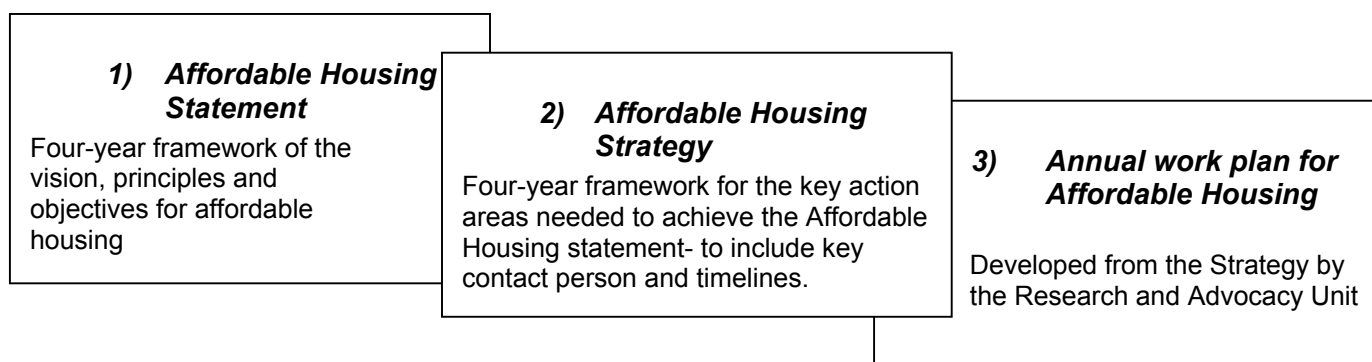
The Statement will be reviewed every four years, with the Strategy reported upon annually, and reviewed annually. It is the annual implementation plan which gives life to Council's Affordable Housing policy.

However, the Affordable Housing Statement and Strategy do not sit in isolation within Council. It complements a raft of mechanisms designed to facilitate, support or retain affordable housing developments, communities and support sectors. The Strategy formalises links to Council branches such as; Urban Planning; Aged and Disabilities; Building and Regulatory Services; and Family and Children's Services through numerous strategies contained in the latter part of this document.

**Diagram 1** shows the relationship between the Affordable Housing Statement and Strategy and the major strategic and operational planning and reporting processes of Council.



**Diagram 2** shows the relationship between the Affordable Housing Statement, the accompanying Strategy and the annual detailed work plan.



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#### 4.0 SCOPE (con'td)

The annual work plan for each of the 5 objective areas of the Affordable Housing Statement will be drawn from the Strategy, and articulated and evaluated each year. The process will be closely linked to Council's annual planning cycle.

This annual approach to implementing and evaluating progress will help Council to undertake actions that are:

- most relevant to the community in a changing environment;
- achievable; and
- supported through the annual budget process.

It also means Council can check on progress against the goals and priorities for affordable housing, use the knowledge gained from the experiences of the previous year, and take the necessary steps to keep moving forward.

#### 5.0 Supporting documentation

The following documents have informed development of the strategies to achieve the vision and objectives:

- *City of Yarra- Housing Needs and Trends (2004);*
- *City of Yarra- 2004 Affordable Housing Policy and Strategic Plan Discussion Paper;*
- *1999 City of Yarra Strength in Diversity: Affordable Housing Statement and Strategies;*
- *Council Plan 2004-2008;*
- *Municipal Public Health Plan Framework and Action Plan 2004-2007 (draft);*
- *Municipal Strategic Statement;*
- *Melbourne 2030*
- *Work undertaken by the Inner Melbourne Region-Regional Housing Working Group*
- *Yarra Homelessness Services Study 2002*

Copies of these documents are available from Council's Community Planner- Housing on request.

#### DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Affordable housing	Housing which is appropriate to the needs of low to moderate income households and does not consume such a high proportion of household income that it leaves the household with insufficient money to meet other essential needs. (ie clothes, transport, food, medical etc) <sup>5</sup>
Diverse stock	Diverse housing stock is reflected by the provision of choice of housing stock, tenure, type, cost, amenity and location within a geographic area.
Housing stock	Forms of housing and numbers of bedrooms.
Tenure	Ownership, public and private rental.
Accessibility	Cost, availability and location to services.
Vision	The end result that we strive to achieve.
Objective	The areas where we have agreed to focus our efforts and energies in order to reach our vision.
Action	The specific things we will do within the strategy to achieve our objectives.
Outcome	The result of our actions.



<sup>5</sup> City of Yarra, 1999 Affordable Housing Statement.

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## Vision

*A City with a diverse mix of people and a range of appropriate and affordable housing is fundamental to supporting our cultural, social and economic diversity, which we recognise as an essential strength of the City of Yarra.*

## Objectives

### **1. Growing Affordable Housing Stock**

*To develop a strategic approach to the planning, advocacy and development of social and affordable housing developments within the municipality.*

*To facilitate projects that maintain and enhance the availability of affordable housing through partnerships, contributions and incentives.*

### **2. Informing Affordable Housing Sector Research and Development**

*To coordinate information and monitoring of housing issues.*

### **3. Coordinating Council's Affordable Housing Responses**

*To develop strategies and mechanisms to co-ordinate its numerous and varied interdepartmental responses to affordable housing issues.*

### **4. Support Networking and Coordination for services of Affordable Housing communities**

*To develop strategies and processes that promote partnerships and opportunities for information exchange with the whole community in working for the responsible development of social and affordable housing.*

### **5. Advocating for fair and adequate Affordable Housing.**

*To advocate and influence all levels of government to ensure that affordable housing meets the current and future needs of residents.*

## Principles

*Council acknowledges that housing is a fundamental human right and will seek to ensure the availability of a range of housing types to meet the needs of our diverse community.*

*Council strongly values and will actively promote the positive contribution that affordable housing makes to the City's social and cultural diversity, distinctive identity and the maintenance of a sustainable economy.*

*Council will support residents, including those experiencing disadvantage, with opportunities to participate in all aspects of community life including access to resources, consultation and planning.*

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## Objective 1 Growing Affordable Housing Stock

Key Actions	Responsible Unit	Partner Units/ organisations	Timeline	Reportable outcome	Budget considerations
1.1 Investigate incentives, partnerships and Council contributions that encourage the <b>development</b> of new affordable housing within the Municipal Strategic Statement.	Urban Planning Branch	Research and Advocacy Unit	June 2005	Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS) review	Within existing budget
1.2 Investigate incentives, partnerships and Council contributions that encourage the retention of existing social and affordable housing within the Municipal Strategic Statement.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Urban Planning Branch and other identified government departments and/or authorities.	June 2005	MSS review	Within existing budget
1.3 Explore minimum benchmarks for the provision of affordable housing in private housing re-developments involving 20 or more dwellings.	Urban Planning Branch	Research and Advocacy Unit	June 2006	MSS review	Refer to 2005/06 budget
1.4 Identify Council and/or other publicly owned land and/or assets with the potential to be earmarked for one or more affordable housing options.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Asset Management Division and other identified government departments and/or authorities.	Ongoing	Report developed	Within existing budget
1.5 Take an active role at the preliminary stages of development to ensure the inclusion of affordable housing options.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Urban Planning Branch	June 2005	Protocol developed	Within existing budget

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## Objective 2 Informing Affordable Housing Sector through Research and Development

Key Actions	Responsible Unit	Partner Units/ organisations	Timeline	Reportable outcome	Budget considerations
2.1 Review the municipal profile on social and affordable housing including relevant statistics and projections to assist agencies in planning and submissions.	Research and Advocacy Unit	as identified	June 2006	Profile developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget
2.2 Prepare a research paper on the measurable benefits of supporting social and affordable housing within the inner city ( <i>linked to 2-e</i> ).	Research and Advocacy Unit	Economic development Branch, Chief Financial Officer and other partners as identified ie Labour market analysts	December 2005	Paper developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget
2.3 Establish data collection protocols with key social housing providers including the Office of Housing and local community housing providers to obtain relevant local social housing and homelessness statistics.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Key government and non-government stakeholders	December 2005	Data collection process developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget
2.4 Compile demographic data and projections to meet the needs of advocacy campaigns.	Research and Advocacy Unit	As identified	Ongoing	Data provided to key advocacy campaigns	Within existing budget
2.5 Identify and develop research partnerships with appropriate bodies to undertake relevant research projects.	Research and Advocacy Unit	As identified	December 2005	Partnerships identified and developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget

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## Objective 3 Coordinating Council's Affordable Housing Responses

Key Actions	Responsible Unit	Partner Units/ organisations	Timeline	Reportable outcome	Budget considerations
3.1 Establish a network within Council to coordinate and improve social planning and service delivery to residents of social and affordable housing.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Community Development Division	June 2005	Network established	Within existing budget
3.2 Monitor changes in rooming house registrations and coordinate Council's internal management on rooming houses.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Building and regulatory Services, Urban Planning and other stakeholders as identified	December 2005	Coordination process identified and implemented.	Refer to 2005/06 budget
3.3 Identify incentives to encourage good management, quality environment and compliance within a viable rooming house sector.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Building and regulatory Services, Urban Planning and other stakeholders as identified	December 2005	Protocols developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget
3.4 Co-ordinate an inter-departmental working group to identify pathways to ensure affordable housing providers are supported through council processes.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Building and regulatory Services, Urban Planning and other stakeholders	December 2005	Working Group established	Refer to 2005/06 budget

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## Objective 4 Support networking and Coordination for services of Affordable Housing communities

Key Actions	Responsible Unit	Partner Units/ organisations	Timeline	Reportable outcome	Budget considerations
4.1 Contribute to, and lead where appropriate regular forums and networks to coordinate information on affordable housing across the municipality.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Housing and homelessness sector partnerships	Bi-annual	Forums established	Within existing budget
4.2 Convene and contribute to the Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Housing and homelessness sector partnerships	Bi-monthly	Network supported	Within existing budget
4.3 Convene and contribute to the Yarra Wide public Tenant Associations Forum.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Public Tenant Associations	quarterly	Network supported	Within existing budget
4.4 Develop action- based forums and working groups to address housing and homelessness issues as identified.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Housing and homelessness sector partnerships	annually	Forums convened	Within existing budget
4.5 Develop community-based strategies to discuss and implement improvements in public housing..	Research and Advocacy Unit	Housing and homelessness sector partnerships	annually	Forums convened	Within existing budget
4.6 Provide opportunities for marginalised groups to participate in active citizenship.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Residents, housing and homelessness sector partnerships	annually	Participation strategy developed	Within existing budget

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## Objective 5 Advocating for fair and adequate Affordable Housing.

Key Actions	Responsible Unit	Partner Units/ organisations	Timeline	Reportable outcome	Budget considerations
5.1 Contribute to and lead, where appropriate regional and State affordable housing campaigns.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Residents, housing and homelessness sector and local government partnerships	annually	Campaigns identified and implemented	Within existing budget
5.2 As identified through the Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network's annual workplan, advocate for more affordable and appropriate housing.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network	annually	Campaigns identified and implemented	Within existing budget
5.3 Develop Council responses to State and Federal affordable housing policy initiatives.	Research and Advocacy Unit	As identified	Monitored bi-annually	Campaigns identified and responses submitted	Within existing budget
5.4 Work with State and Commonwealth governments to have land and/or assets that are surplus to their needs used for social and affordable housing. <i>(linked to Strategy 1-d)</i>	Research and Advocacy Unit	Urban Planning Branch and other identified government departments and/or authorities.	Monitored bi-annually	Land/assets identified	Within existing budget
5.5 Advocate for additional and more appropriate social and affordable housing stock especially crisis and transitional accommodation.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Yarra Housing and Homelessness Network	annually	Campaign supported	Within existing budget
5.6 Seek to work in partnership with other local governments to influence	Research and Advocacy Unit	Urban Planning branch, Housing and	June 2005	Campaign supported	Within existing budget

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<b>Key Actions</b>	<b>Responsible Unit</b>	<b>Partner Units/ organisations</b>	<b>Timeline</b>	<b>Reportable outcome</b>	<b>Budget considerations</b>
State Planning legislation to better support affordable housing developments.		Local Government Network (HaLGN) and other identified local governments			
5.7 In conjunction with local stakeholders, develop action based forums and working groups to address housing and labour market efficiencies, and other issues as identified.	Research and Advocacy Unit	Residents, housing and homelessness sector and local government partnerships	December 2005	Forum developed	Refer to 2005/06 budget

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