



# Your Say Yarra

## Draft Yarra Housing Strategy

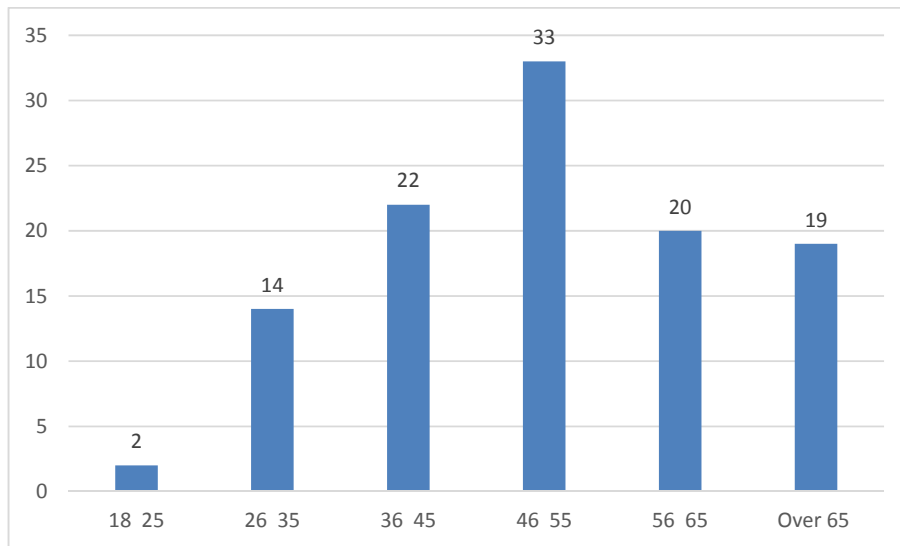
Online survey results and officer response



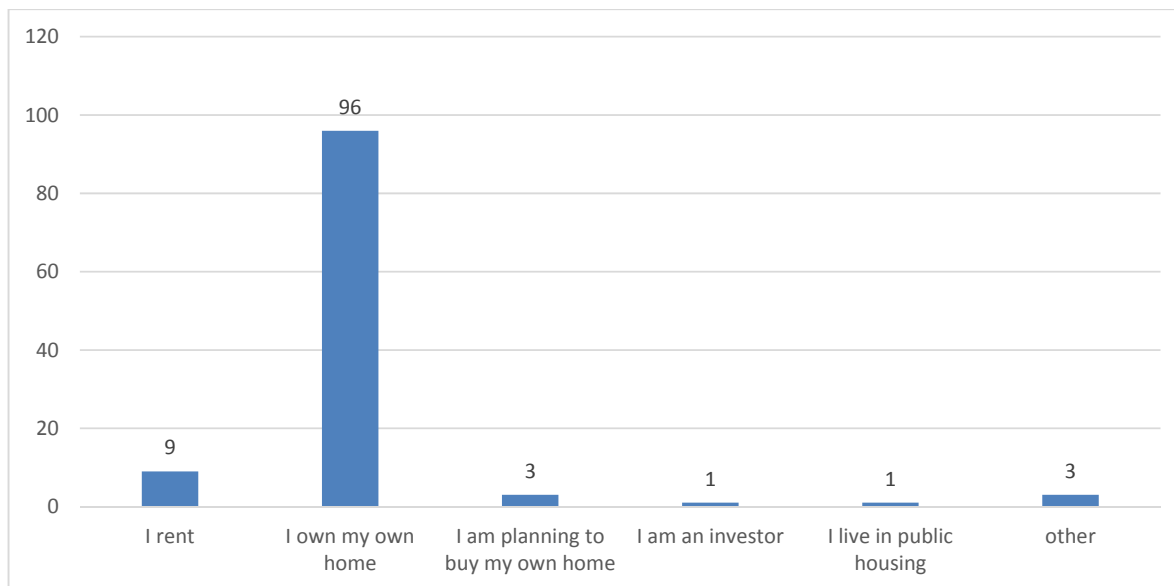
## You Say Yarra online survey

In total, 108 participants took part in the online survey. Most participants owned their own home and were aged over 35 years old.

**Table 1: Age of participants**



**Table 2: Housing tenure of participants.**



The online survey asked for feedback on each of the strategic directions in the draft Yarra Housing Strategy. For each strategic direction, participants were asked:

- On a scale of 1 – 5, how effective is this strategic direction in meeting Yarra's future housing needs?
- Why did you select this rating?
- What are the strengths of this strategic direction?
- Are there areas where it could be improved?
- Are there any gaps that the Housing Strategy needs to address?

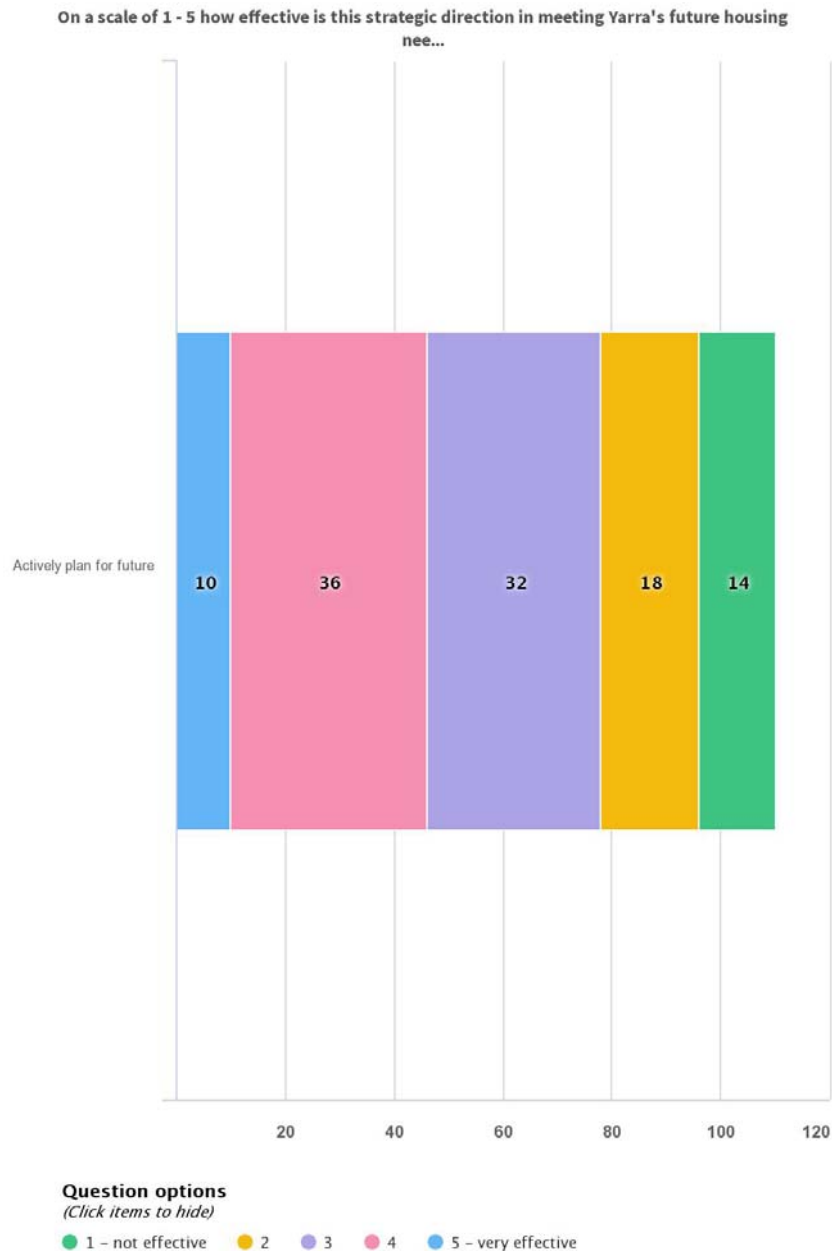
The following sections of this report provide an outline of each strategic direction, a summary of the responses relating to the strategic direction and an officer response.

## Strategic direction 1: Actively plan for future population growth and housing needs

This strategic direction will:

- Monitor population and housing growth forecasts.
- Ensure an adequate supply of residential land is available to accommodate future housing growth.
- Monitor housing delivery trends and demographic changes.
- Identify future investigation areas for long-term residential potential including key boulevards and surplus employment land.

**Table 3: Participants response to strategic direction 1**



### **Strategic direction 1: Summary of responses**

- The majority of participants were glad to see that Council is developing a housing strategy and agree that housing provision should be well-planned (rather than ad hoc).
- Many thought monitoring is essential to the strategy and should be ongoing and responsive to change. Residents requested the process be transparent and that monitoring data be made public.
- Some respondents commented that this strategic direction is too vague and that not enough detail was provided regarding council's specific plans and how implementation will occur.
- Some respondents had some major concerns regarding population growth and housing provision. Principally, there was a general fear of Yarra becoming overcrowded.
- Some commented that there is no such thing as surplus land, and that there are already too many high rises.
- Another major concern was that of implementation and enforcement. Responses suggest a lack of confidence in council's ability to guide housing provision. Rather, many respondents believe developers will dictate housing provision, and that VCAT is corrupt and biased towards developers.

### **Strategic direction 1: Officer's response**

The State Government's Victoria In Future 2016 (VIF2016) population and housing projections indicate there will be 29,413 new residents in Yarra and 13,431 new dwellings required by 2031. For an inner city area, with high population forecasts and excellent access to jobs and services, strong housing growth in Yarra will continue. Council supports the development of new housing to meet the demands of its growing residential population.

To demonstrate that Yarra has a sufficient supply of available land to accommodate projected growth, SGS Economics and Planning have created an interactive model to estimate housing capacity within Yarra's major and neighbourhood activity centres over the coming 15 years. The model shows that Yarra's activity centres, alone, can accommodate the amount specified by VIF2016 for the whole of the municipality. This provides Council the opportunity for minimal change in the residential hinterland. The model has informed the Yarra strategic housing framework plan, which shows the spatial distribution of future growth.

The purpose of Strategic Direction 1 is to ensure that Yarra, following the adoption of the strategy, continues to monitor population growth, land capacity, and evolving development trends to affectively plan for future housing growth and needs. It is noted that the interactive model can also be used to monitor housing delivery over time and assess implications of built form controls on housing capacity figures. The model will be a reliable source for understanding long-term housing capacity in Yarra. For clarification purposes, the wording of Strategic direction 1 and its associated strategies should be amended to better reflect its broad purpose.

The Yarra Housing Strategy will provide certainty for landowners, developers and the community about the level of housing growth expected in each neighbourhood and activity centre. The Yarra Housing Strategy will be implemented as:

- A reference document in the Yarra Planning Scheme; and
- Policy in the Planning Policy Framework (PPF).

It is noted that policy contained in the PPF will guide the exercise of discretion in relation to permit requirements.

#### Summary of changes to strategy:

- The wording of Strategic Direction 1 be amended to better reflect its broad purpose.

## Strategic direction 2: Direct housing growth to appropriate locations

This strategic direction identifies:

- Minimal change area: Established residential areas in the Neighbourhood Residential Zone with heritage significance.
- Incremental change area: Established residential areas and neighbourhood activity centres in the General Residential Zone that have limited heritage significance
- Moderate change area: Medium to large development sites in major activity centres, the Mixed Use Zone: or identified as key development with heritage significance, sensitive residential interfaces or other site constraints
- High change area: Large sites in major activity centres, the Mixed Use Zone or identified in as key development sites without heritage significance, sensitive residential interfaces or other site constraints.

### Strategic direction 2: Summary of responses

- There were many requests to define the categories in more detail.
- There were also some complaints that too many areas were still “yet to be classified” and this hindered their ability to have an informed opinion.
- Residents had some trouble understanding the strategic housing framework plan and suggested including more street names.
- Some suggested that the map does not reflect reality, that many of these areas are already experiencing development, inconsistent with these area classifications.

#### Minimal Change Areas

- Support for the large areas designated as minimal change was mixed.
- Some felt that its application is an appropriate way to protect heritage areas and prevent over-development, and that the area should be expanded to better protect more of Yarra, including Richmond, Alphington, the river corridor, and specific streets (Victoria St, Bridge Rd, Stafford St, and Swan St).
- Others argued that the areas designated as minimal change protects wealthy suburbs and cater to NIMBYs.
- There was some concern that there were too many minimal change areas which will result in undersupply, especially in well-serviced areas.
- Participants questioned if the minimal change areas will have height requirements.

#### Incremental Change Areas

- Support for the areas designated as incremental change was mixed.
- Some felt that this was too much change for some areas, especially Richmond and Heidelberg Road, while others believed that this kind of area strikes an appropriate balance between protection and development.
- Some participants believed that there are some areas that are perhaps more appropriate for greater change, especially along transit corridors.
- According to respondents, incremental change should not come at the expense of open space or design quality.

#### Moderate Change Areas

- Support for the areas designated as moderate change was positive.
- Some noted that this level of development must be accompanied by development of social and transport infrastructure and services.
- There is support for more mixed use and larger developments in these areas, as long as they are designed to complement prevailing neighbourhood character.

#### High Change Areas

- Support for high change areas was mixed.
- While many participants were not opposed entirely to areas of high change, there was concern that large-scale developments are not sensitive to heritage and will overshadow existing development.
- Many agreed that the areas designated for high change were generally appropriate.
- Many believed that parking and upgrades to public transport in the municipality are required to accommodate this level of change.
- There is support for more social and affordable housing in these areas.

## **Strategic direction 2: Officer's response**

The strategy categorises all residential land in Yarra into the four distinct housing change areas, as required by Plan Melbourne 2017-2050, based on the following:

- Current and proposed zone and overlay requirements: Types of use and development allowed in each zone;
- Context: Walking distance and access to services, public transport and employment centres, proximity to activity centres;
- Land attributes: Land constraints (including sensitive interfaces), lot size, development activity and emerging character;
- Capacity: Amount of growth is likely to occur in an area, given a set of assumptions; and
- Community feedback: Where growth is acceptable to the community and where it isn't.
- Strategic planning work: Structure plans, built form frameworks and proposed built form controls.

The four change areas have been applied to the strategic housing framework plan based on these set of categories. Some sites within these areas may have been recently developed. The scale and form of residential growth also may differ across a change area and development proposals will need to appropriately respond to their context and the capacity of an individual site to accommodate housing growth.

In the draft strategy, Victoria, Smith, Brunswick and Gertrude Streets and Bridge Road were categorised as "yet to be classified". At the time of public consultation, strategic work had not yet progressed for these areas to substantiate the application of the level of change areas. Residents will have a further chance to comment on the complete strategic housing framework plan via the formal exhibition of the Yarra Planning Scheme rewrite amendment.

It is noted that the strategy does not propose to implement height controls. The scale and form of residential development is informed by built form and heritage controls where these exist. The built form projects will provide site-specific directions on the appropriate scale and form of development and the retention of heritage fabric in the activity centres. In those change areas where no site-specific controls apply, local policy and zone provisions will determine built form outcomes for sites and areas.

The strategy aims to promote Yarra as a place where people can get most of their day to-day goods and services, within a short walk, cycle or public transport trip. High and moderate housing growth areas are proposed to be located within or close to activity centres that have excellent access to services, open space and public transport. While the availability of car parking is important in maintaining Yarra's liveability, it is not the key focus of this strategy and must be addressed as part other strategic planning work.

### Summary of changes to strategy

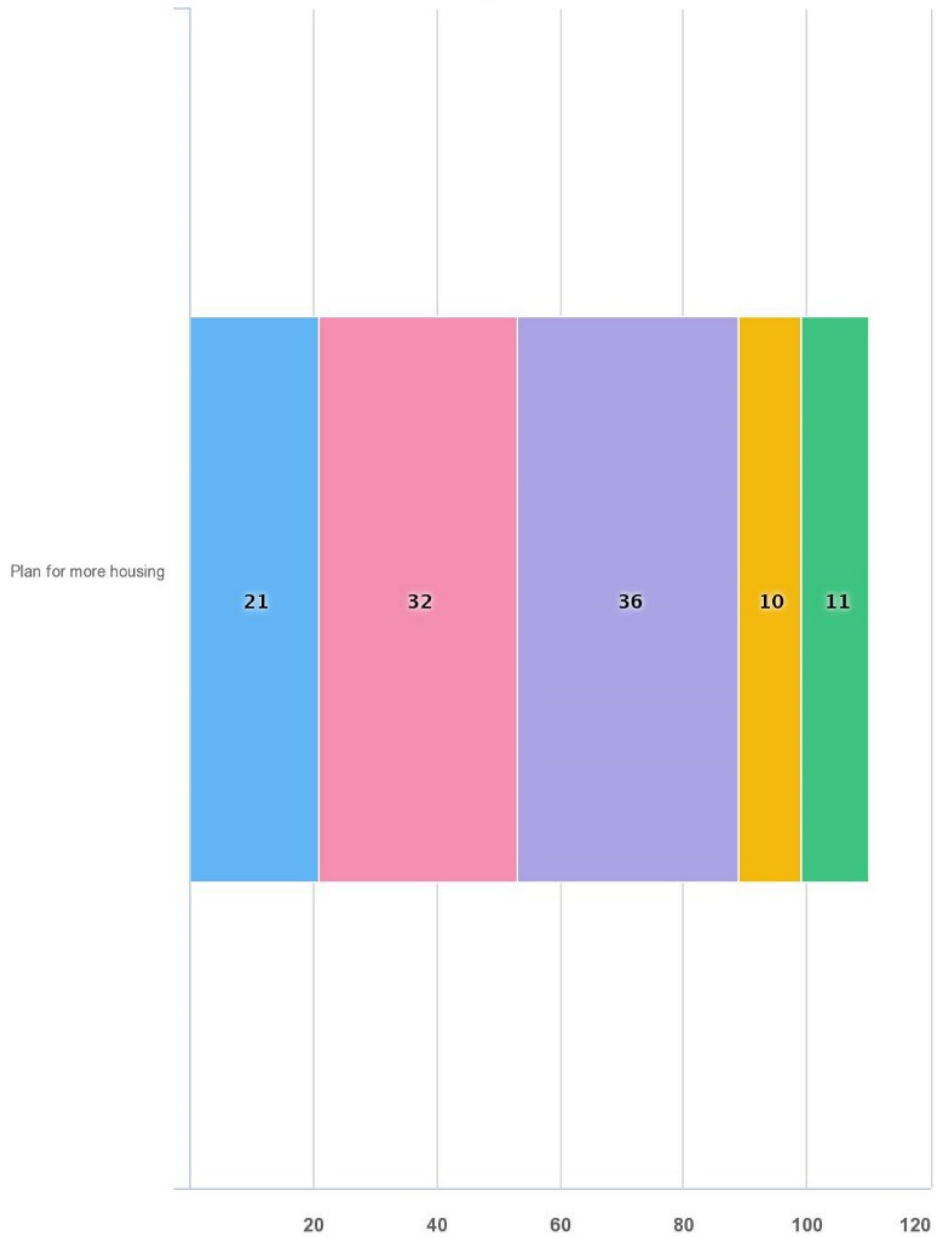
- Update the strategic housing framework plan to apply the level of change areas to the "yet to be classified" areas. These are in the activity centres and will reflect the extensive built form work which has underpinned recent interim planning controls supported by Council.
- Update the strategic housing framework plan to include more street names and improve comprehensibility.
- Amend the strategy to include a methodology for the application of the change areas.
- Amended the strategy to provide further information on each change area, including their level of growth, generally characteristics, percentage of land coverage, and the type of development expected in each area.

### Strategic direction 3: plan for more housing choice to support Yarra's diverse community

This strategic direction will:

- Promote the inclusion of more than 50% of dwellings in apartment developments to be accessible and adaptable housing and housing suitable for all life stages.
- Encourage the development of aged care, student accommodation and key worker housing within and close to Activity Centres, Health and Education precincts.
- Introduce a requirement for a Housing Diversity Assessment for larger developments.
- Encourage more family-friendly design of communal open spaces in apartment developments.
- Support the retention of larger homes for families.
- Monitor trends on down-sizing among older persons.

On a scale of 1 - 5, how effective is this strategic direction in addressing Yarra's future housing...



**Question options**

*(Click items to hide)*

- 1 - not effective   ● 2   ● 3   ● 4   ● 5 - very effective

**Table 4: Participants response to strategic direction 3.**

### **Strategic direction 3: Summary of responses**

- There was a high level of support for this strategy.
- Respondents acknowledged the need to provide housing to low income families, the ageing, disabled, and other emerging groups.
- Aged care in particular was identified as a need.
- Some expressed fear that the needs of the ageing won't be met and forced downsizing and relocation will occur rather than allowing residents to age in place.
- Others suggested that the need for housing choice should not ignore the existing needs of families, and if not executed well, this strategy could result in overcrowded, poorly-designed developments.
- The Co-housing design model was proposed by many participants as a strategy to diversify the market and cater to different groups within a development.

### **Strategic direction 3: Officer's response**

As most of the new housing being delivered in Yarra is in the form of apartment buildings there is a need to ensure high-density development can accommodate different housing needs, including design considerations to make higher-density living more attractive for larger household groups, students, and people with disabilities and older people in Yarra.

The draft strategy proposes to introduce a set of strategies to achieve positive outcomes in new higher density development in Yarra. Importantly, it seeks to introduce a requirement into the Yarra Planning Scheme for housing diversity to be demonstrated in planning applications for residential rezoning and major residential developments (50 or more dwellings), based on available demographic information. Housing diversity could be demonstrated by including expected demographic mix, to enable consideration of particular housing needs in a planning application for a major redevelopment or rezoning. Early consideration of these issues will help to ensure that future housing stock is more suitable for all households throughout their life stages.

It is considered that the Yarra Housing Strategy should address cohousing as emerging housing model to diversify the market and cater to different groups within a development. Cohousing aims to mix private and shared spaces in a way that meets the need for both privacy and a sense of community and support. Cohousing can provide housing that is affordable, accessible and which facilitates social interaction. In general, cohousing and its benefits are not well understood by the community and this may limit residents' acceptance of cohousing development. It is considered that planning policy support for cohousing can remove some barriers to this type of development.

#### Summary of changes to strategy:

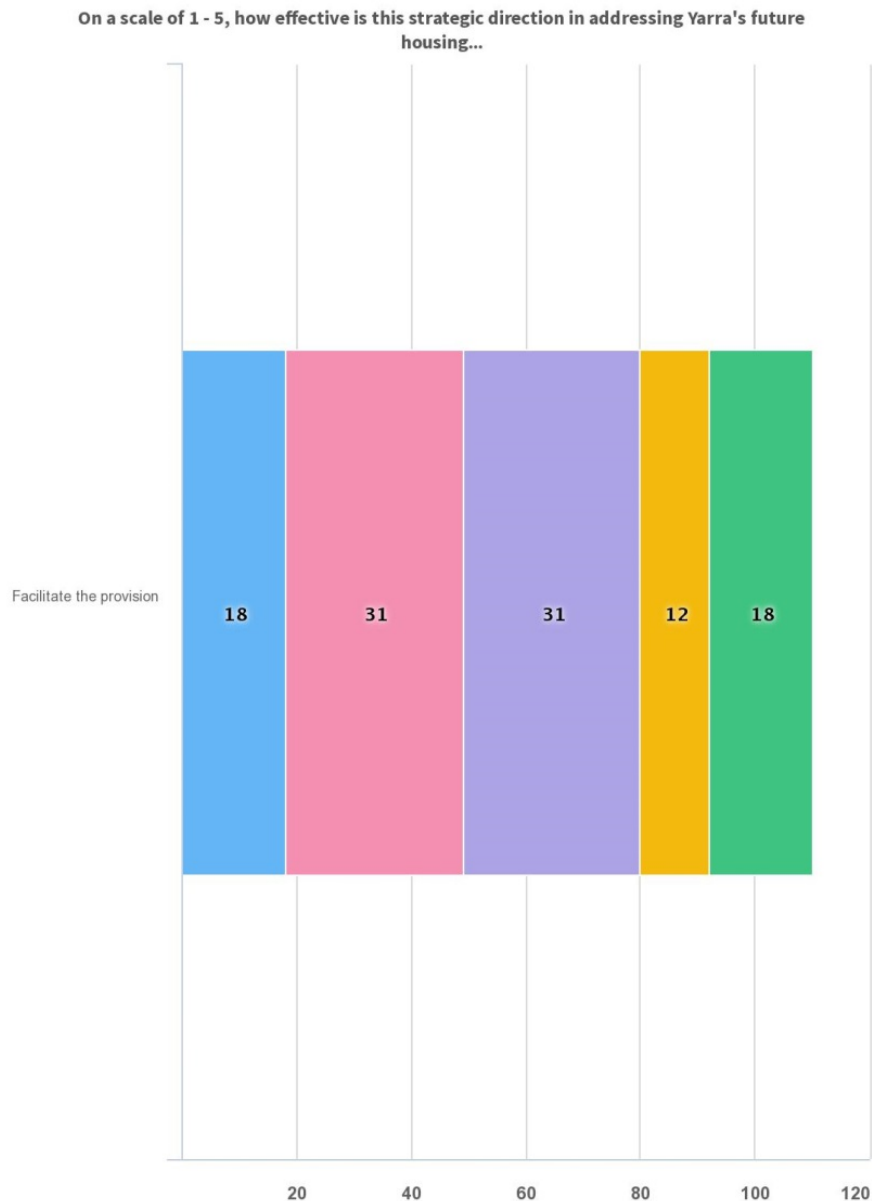
- Amend Strategic Direction 3 to include a strategy to support the cohousing design model.



## Strategic direction 4: Facilitate the provision of more affordable rental housing in Yarra

This strategic direction will:

- Foster effective partnerships between community housing providers and the property development industry to deliver more affordable rental housing;
- Introduce a requirement in the Yarra Planning Scheme for all future significant redevelopment rezonings to provide a minimum 5% affordable housing;
- Support shared equity models of development; and
- Advocate policy and legislative changes that enable Council to introduce inclusionary zoning or an



### Question options

(Click items to hide)

● 1 - not effective ● 2 ● 3 ● 4 ● 5 - very effective

Table 5: Participants response to strategic direction 4.

#### **Strategic direction 4: Summary of responses**

- The majority of participants supported this direction and viewed it as important to preserving Yarra's diversity and affordability.
- Many comments suggested that 5% is not a high enough target for affordable housing, and that 10-15% would be more appropriate.
- There was support for inclusionary zoning, and potentially for shared equity models as well, though some respondents are unsure how these strategies function in practice and how council will enforce affordable housing requirements.
- Some suggested that affordable housing should be peppered through the municipality rather than concentrated in one tower or one neighbourhood.
- Social and affordable housing targets and requirements should be set and enforced by council.

#### **Strategic direction 4: Officer's response**

To maintain Yarra's social and economic diversity, there needs to be more affordable housing options suitable for very low, low and moderate income households. It is noted that within the current legislative framework, local government can only provide for more housing for affordable housing by:

- Entering into an agreement, under section 173(1A) of the Planning and Environment Act 1987, with a land owner for the development or provision of affordable housing;
- Advocating for policy and legislative changes; and
- Facilitating partnerships between developers and affordable housing associations/providers.

The draft strategy recommended the introduction of minimum of 5% provision of affordable housing (when sites are rezoned for residential use, and in major developments of 50 or more dwellings) in the Municipal Strategic Statement (MSS). This is consistent with Council's adopted Policy Guidance Note for Affordable Housing in Significant Redevelopments, November 2017.

Since adoption of the note, the property sector has become more receptive to providing more than 5% affordable housing at significant redevelopment sites. Yarra has entered into a number of agreements with site owners to provide at least 10% affordable housing. It is considered that this strategy should now recommend the introduction of a requirement into the Yarra Planning Scheme that seeks at least 10% affordable housing (when sites are rezoned for residential use, and in major developments of 50 or more dwellings). It is noted that Yarra would be the first Council to include a mandated requirement for affordable housing in the Planning Policy Framework.

#### Summary of changes to strategy:

- The housing strategy has been amended to introduce of minimum of 10 % provision of affordable housing.

Question: Are there any gaps the housing strategy should address?

Summary of identified gaps:	Officer's response:
<p>There was a desire to link housing strategy with other strategies (open space, employment) so residents can be confident infrastructure and services development and open space protection is consistent with housing growth.</p>	<p>The Yarra Housing Strategy is complemented by additional strategic work being prepared as part of the wider YPS rewrite work program such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Yarra's Spatial Economic and Employment Strategy (SEES);</li> <li>• Activity Centre Built Form Framework and structure planning; and</li> <li>• Heritage Policy Revision.</li> </ul> <p>Yarra is also currently in the process of developing a new open space strategy. The adopted Yarra Housing Strategy will inform the new open space strategy.</p> <p>The housing capacity modelling that informs Housing Strategy has been provided to Council's open space team to inform their future planning.</p>
<p>Many believed that the Yarra housing strategy should also link to housing strategies from adjoining councils so housing development in areas such as Alphington is consistent across boundaries.</p>	<p>It is noted that one of the key short-term activities to implement Plan Melbourne 2017-2050 is the preparation of metropolitan regional housing plans by the regional metropolitan groups. It is expected that the Yarra Housing Strategy will provide important information to inform the content of the regional housing plans.</p>
<p>There was support for greater protection of heritage areas and how design standards will be developed and implemented to ensure new developments are environmentally sustainable and respectful of neighbourhood character.</p>	<p>Built form, frameworks have been prepared for Swan, Victoria, Brunswick, Johnston, and Smith Streets, along with Queens Parade and Bridge Road. The frameworks are being informed by detailed heritage reviews to determine how best to protect and enhance heritage streetscapes (as well as individual buildings) in each activity centre, while accommodating opportunities for future housing and employment growth. This work will form the strategic basis for new site-specific built form controls that will guide the scale and form of new development in these activity centres.</p>
<p>Some participants suggested the housing strategy should more explicitly address the needs of Yarra's homeless population.</p>	<p>In June 2018, the IMAP councils undertook a joint count of people sleeping rough in inner Melbourne. Street Count 2018 recorded 392 people sleeping rough across inner Melbourne, with 29 people recorded in Yarra. Key findings across the five municipalities should be included in the strategy.</p>
<p><u>Summary of changes to strategy:</u></p> <p>The housing strategy has been amended to address Yarra's homeless population.</p>	