

## 4. A PROFILE OF HOUSING IN YARRA

### Historical development

The rich and varied history of Yarra is reflected in its built form and mix of residential, industrial and commercial areas. The people, places, activities and economy in Yarra have all undergone significant change in the past years, decades and centuries.



#### 1830-1850: GRID ROADS AND FIRST SUBURBS

Fitzroy was Melbourne's first suburb, following the subdivision of land between Melbourne City and Alexandra Parade in 1839.

Some suburbs, such as Carlton, were comprehensively surveyed and laid out while other areas, such as Collingwood and Richmond, were relatively unplanned. These areas had disjointed and often narrow streets and lots, and were places where cheaper housing was built.

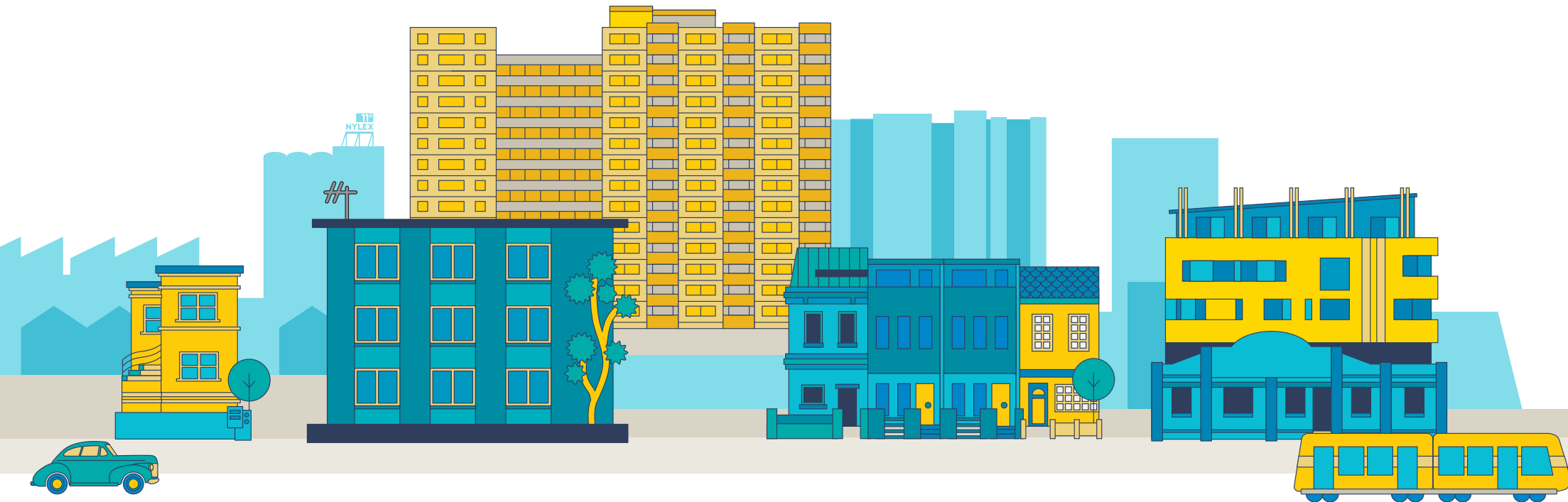
#### 1850-1890: GOLD RUSH TO MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE

Introduction of grand houses in parts of Yarra in areas like Princes Hill, Carlton North, Fitzroy North and Richmond Hill.

More modest housing was constructed in Fitzroy, Collingwood, Abbotsford and Richmond for workers employed in developing industries nearby.

Melbourne's first cable tram routes were developed along the main roads in the latter part of the 19th Century, attracting long corridors of shops and businesses, forming the beginnings of what we recognise today as Yarra's major activity centres.

Many of Yarra's historical landmark buildings, including St Ignatius' Church and the Town Halls with their characteristic clock towers, were built during this period.



### 1920-1950: DEPRESSION AND AUSTERITY

The population decline of the interwar period resulted in different patterns of residential development across Yarra, with some expansion of industrial buildings.

During the Depression, the poorer parts of Fitzroy, Collingwood and Richmond were affected by poverty and classified as slums.

### 1950-1980: POST-WAR CHANGE

In the 1950s, while many families were moving to Melbourne's new suburbs, newly arrived migrants from southern European countries were moving to Yarra. Many of them joined the workforce of the thriving textile, clothing and footwear industries. These new residents brought new foods, languages and a change to the street life and culture.

The Housing Commission's slum clearance projects in the 1950s and 1960s also had a huge impact on Yarra. Whole blocks of houses were demolished and replaced with towering housing estates, dramatically changing the streetscape. Yarra's built form was also being changed by the Melbourne-wide boom in the development of apartment buildings.

### 1980-2018: RETURN TO THE INNER-CITY

The increasing popularity of the inner suburbs in the 1980s as places to live spurred the support for heritage protection for areas of cultural significance and provided the foundations for Yarra's existing heritage controls.

The turn of the millennium saw no slowing in demand for inner city living, business and leisure. Property development continued, diversifying to include creative work spaces, such as design and architectural studios, and niche manufacturing in industries that had a long history in Yarra, such as fashion and food production.

As urban consolidation gained more support in Melbourne in the early 2000s, development was actively directed to activity centres and former industrial areas within the inner city.

Recent changes in Yarra reflect a global trend of people wanting to live closer to city centres to access employment, an inner city lifestyle, nightlife and vibrant places. But change is not new; the area known now as the City of Yarra has been evolving since European settlement in the 1830s.

## Yarra community profile

Understanding the population and household characteristics of Yarra, and how they compare to other local government areas, provides a good insight into Yarra’s residential role and function, and how it is likely to change in the future.

Based on 2016 Australian Bureau of Statistic (ABS) Census data<sup>17</sup>, Yarra contains a multi-cultural population with 28.9% of the population born overseas and 19% from a non-English speaking background. The largest non-English speaking country of birth in the Yarra was Vietnam, where 3.0% of the population were born. In Yarra, 22% of people spoke a language other than English at home.

Yarra also has a young population and workforce, with the largest age group being 25 to 29 year olds, and the median age of residents being 33 years old. The people in Yarra are also increasingly high earners, attracted to what Yarra has to offer such as its proximity to the city centre and its employment, entertainment and education attractors. In 2016, the median weekly personal income for people aged 15 years and over in Yarra was \$1,039, median family income was \$2,509 per week and median household income was \$1,958.

Yarra has one of the highest turnover rates of residents in Melbourne. In 2016, 52.6% of residents were new to their address in the last 5 years, 41.4% moved from elsewhere in Australia and 11.2% moved from overseas.

<sup>17</sup> Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.



### A DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT



28.9% of residents born overseas

3% of residents born in Vietnam



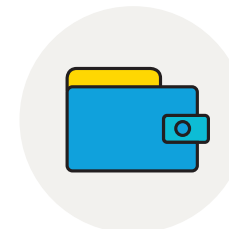
19% of residents come from a non-English speaking background

22% speak a language other than English at home



Largest age group is 25 to 29 year olds

Median age of residents is 33 years old



Median weekly income:

Personal: \$1,039  
Family: \$2,509  
Household: \$1,958



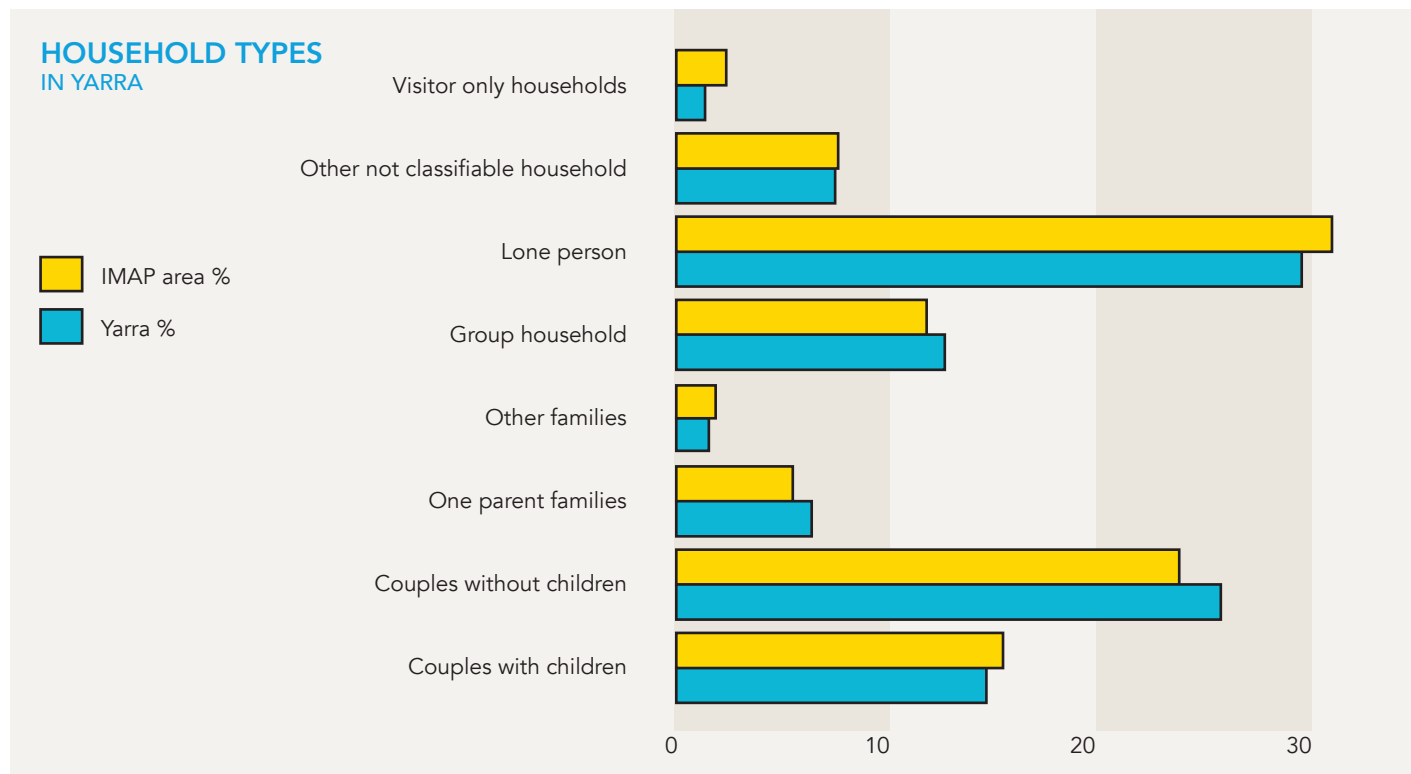
52.6% of residents were new to their address in the last 5 years

In 2017, the estimated resident population of Yarra was 96,368<sup>18</sup>, living in 43,033 dwellings with an average household size of 2.1. The number of dwellings in Yarra have been growing at approximately 1,160 dwellings per annum since 2010<sup>19</sup>.

### Household structure

Household and family structure is one of the most important indicators for understanding and planning for housing needs, providing insights into the level of demand for different types of housing within a municipality.

In 2016, the dominant household type in Yarra was lone person households followed by couples without children. This social trend is reflected throughout the IMAP area. Overall, the proportion of lone person households in Yarra was 29.5% compared to 31.0% in the IMAP area while the proportion of couples without children was 25.7% compared to 23.8% in the IMAP area.



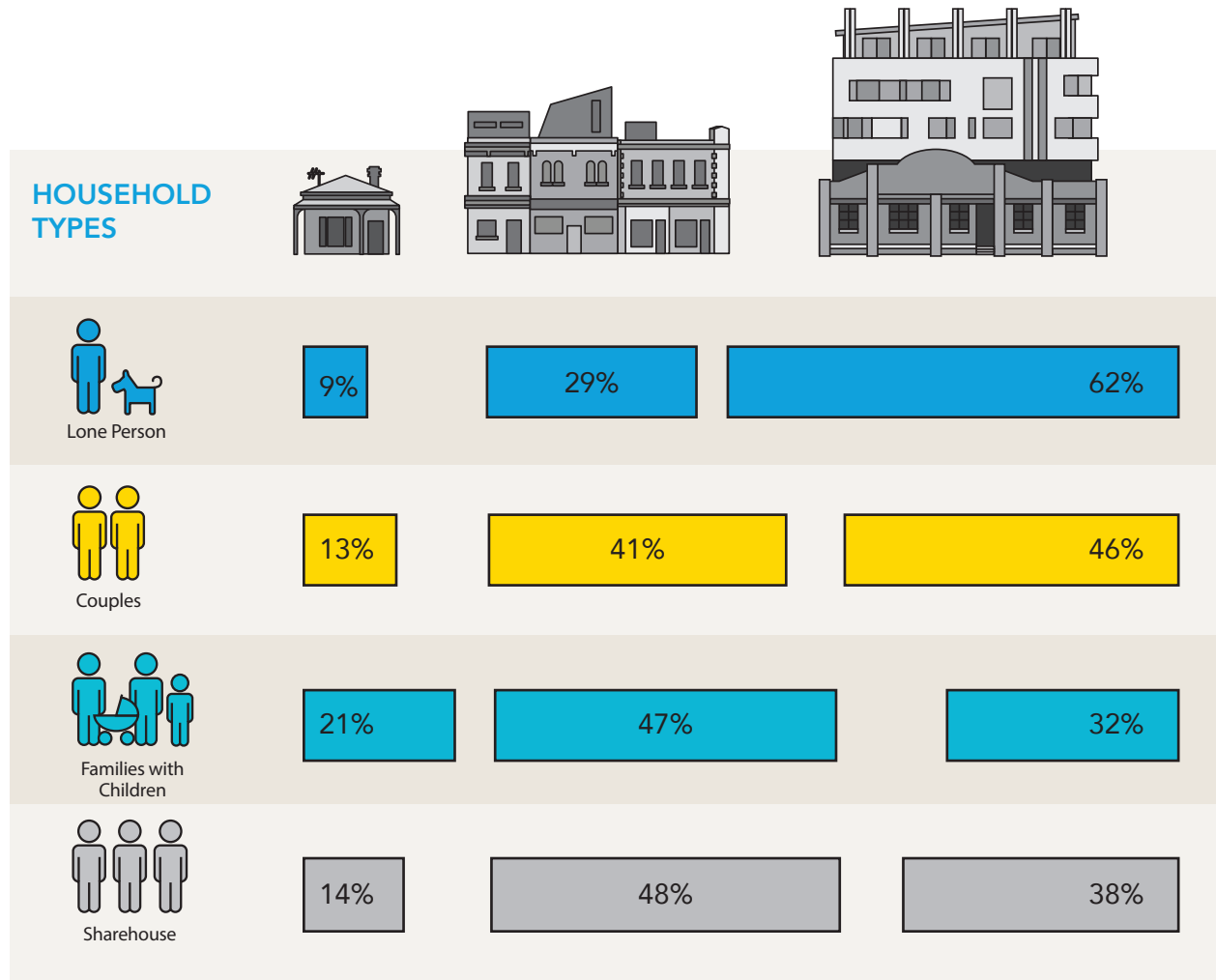
18 Australian Bureau of Statistics, Census of Population and Housing, 2016. Compiled and presented in profile.id by .id, the population experts.

19 Managing Residential Development Taskforce & Victoria. Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (issuing body) 2016, *Central Subregion: Residential Zones State of Play*, Melbourne.

## Housing structure summary

In Yarra:

- Families with children were most likely to live in semi-detached, row or terrace or townhouses;
- Lone persons were most likely to live in an apartment;
- Couples were most likely to live in an apartment or semi-detached, row or terrace or townhouse;
- Sharehouses were most likely to live in semi-detached, row or terrace or townhouses, or apartments; and
- One third of families with children lived in apartments.

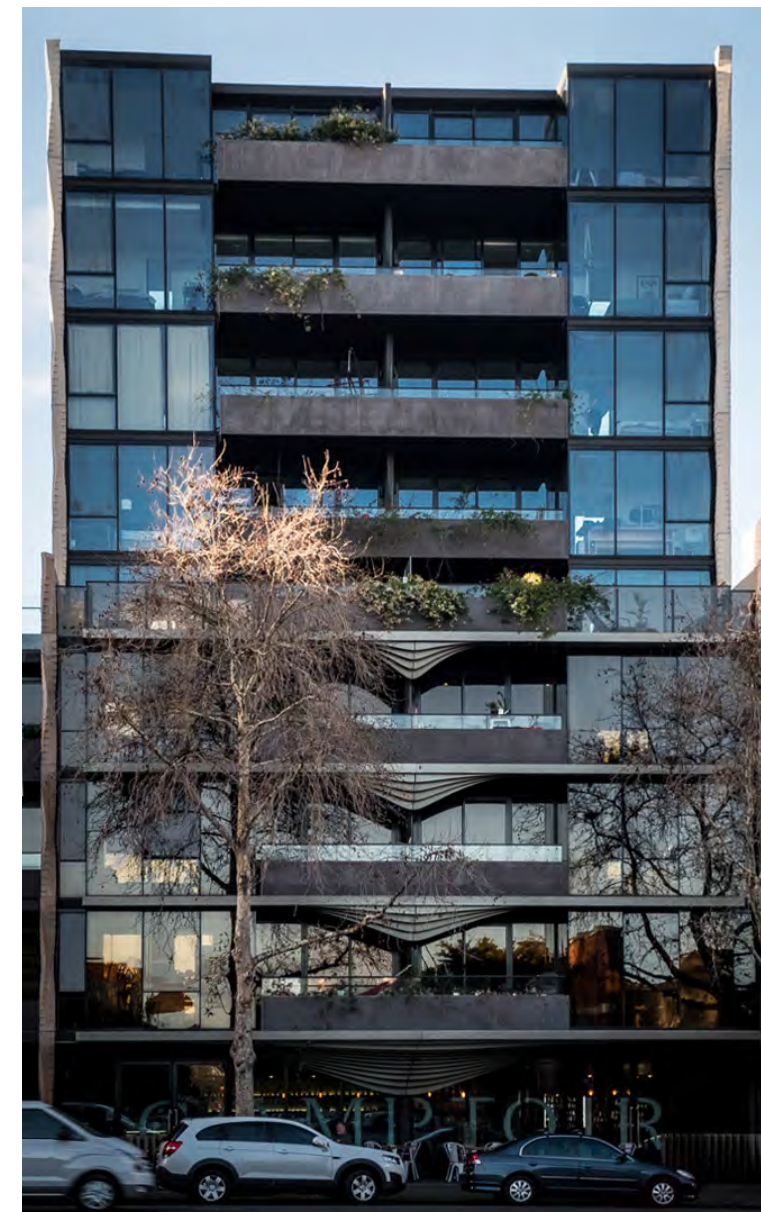
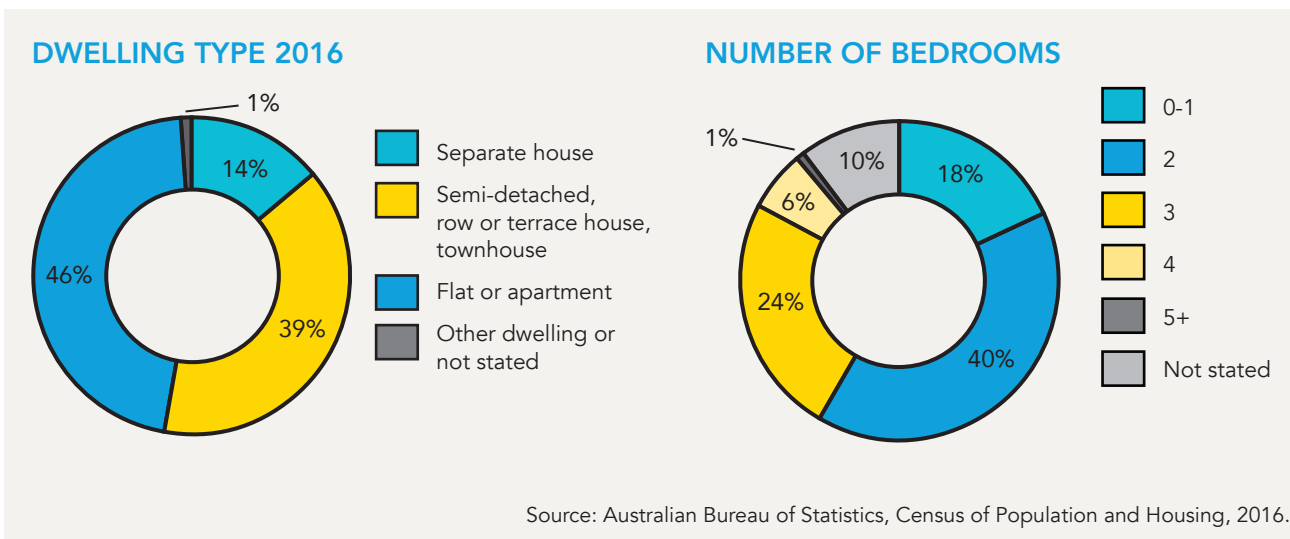


## Housing diversity – dwelling type and bedroom split

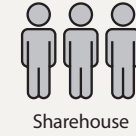
Yarra performs fairly well for an inner city municipality in terms of housing diversity. In 2016, more than 46% of the population lived in a flat or apartment, while only 14% of the population lived in separate housing.

New dwellings in Yarra increasingly have two bedrooms and are located in apartment developments (in 2016, 44% of dwellings were two bedroom dwellings and 46% were apartment dwellings).

These statistics correspond with the high number of lone person households in Yarra, with only 15% of households in Yarra being made up of couples with children in 2016, compared with 33% in Greater Melbourne. This trend is likely to continue.

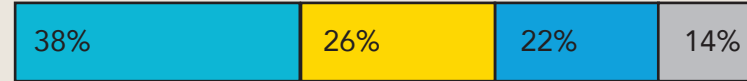


## HOUSEHOLD SPLIT BY DWELLING TYPE



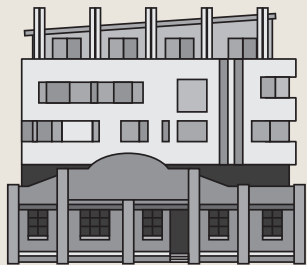
### SEPARATE HOUSE

Separate houses are 14% of Yarra's housing stock and are predominantly occupied by families with children or couples without children.



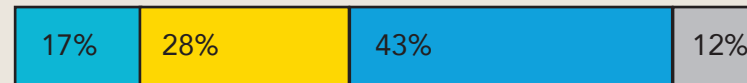
### SEMI-DETACHED, ROW OR TERRACE HOUSE, TOWNHOUSE

Semi-detached, row or terrace houses and townhouses form 39% of Yarra's housing stock and are predominantly occupied by families with children or couples without children.



### FLAT OR APARTMENT

Flats or apartments are 46% of Yarra's housing stock and are predominantly occupied by lone person households and couples without children.



### Housing tenure

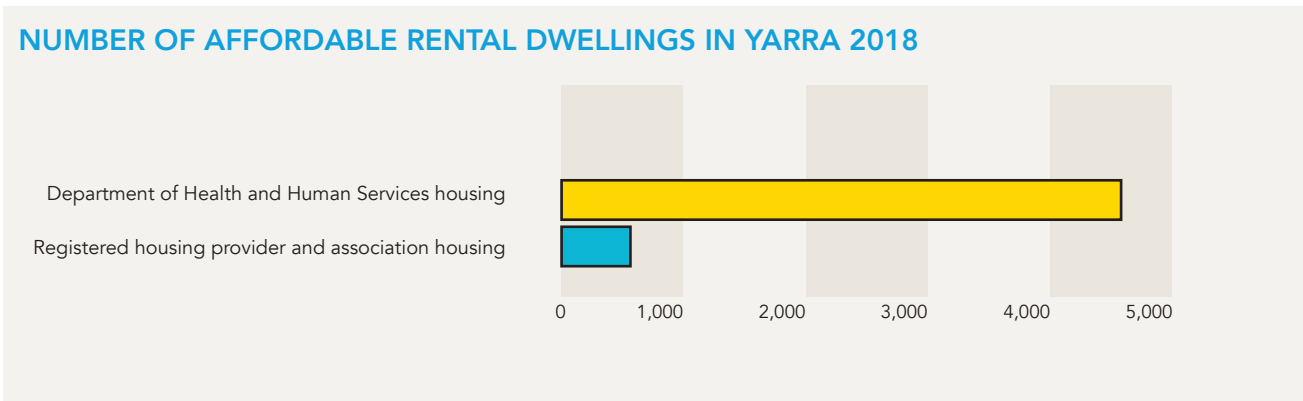
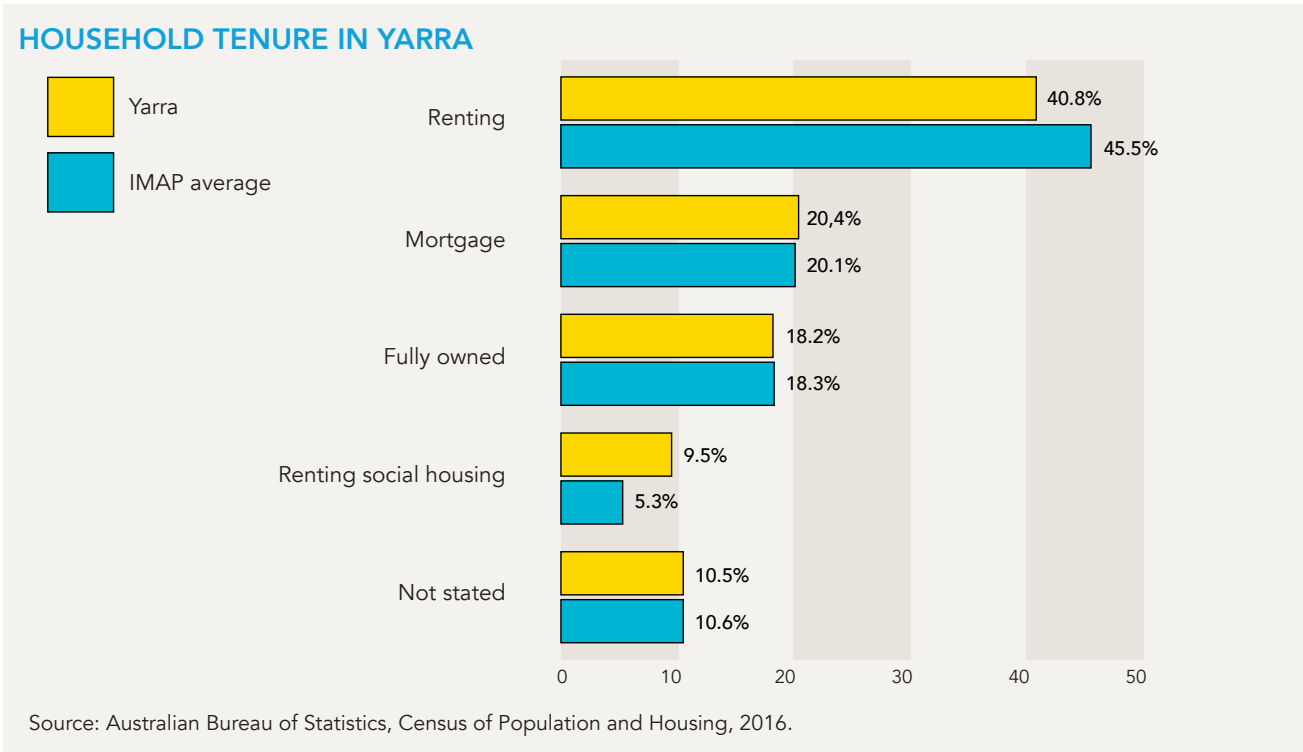
In 2016 the majority of people in Yarra rented (50.3%), followed by people who had a mortgage (20.4%).

The median mortgage repayment per month in Yarra was \$2,167 and median rent per week was \$421. These are comparatively high for metropolitan Melbourne prices, but consistent with IMAP councils.

### Affordable and social housing

Yarra has a higher proportion of social housing compared to the broader IMAP area. In 2016, 9.5% of Yarra's households were renting their dwelling from a government authority, compared to the IMAP average of 5.3%. In Yarra, the Department of Health and Human Services owns and manages 4,615 dwellings. However, more and more, lower income households are facing reduced housing choice due to the limited availability of social housing in Yarra.

Registered housing associations and providers are increasingly delivering more affordable housing options. In Yarra, housing associations and providers manage and/or provide 573 affordable rental dwellings. Housing associations are companies that construct and/or acquire new affordable housing using a mix of government and private sector investment. They also manage housing properties owned by them or leased from other parties, such as the Director of Housing (DOH). Housing providers primarily manage rental housing portfolios for other parties, such as the DOH. Housing providers often specialise in particular client groups which may include disability housing, aged tenants and youth housing.





## People sleeping rough in Yarra

In Yarra, most of the homelessness is hidden, including people staying in boarding houses or temporary accommodation, living in unsafe conditions, or sleeping on friend's couches.

Homelessness is a complex issue and StreetCount helps councils to better understand it and plan support, services and longer term solutions. In June 2018, the IMAP councils undertook a joint count of people sleeping rough in inner Melbourne. StreetCount 2018 recorded 392 people sleeping rough across inner Melbourne, with 29 people recorded in Yarra.

Key findings across the five municipalities include:

- 78% were male and 22% were female;
- 54% of people were aged 26-40 and 34% aged 41-60;
- 79% were Australian born;
- 14% identified as Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander;
- 35% of people were sleeping on the street, 13% in parks and 48% in various other locations including river banks;
- 42% of people surveyed were on the social housing waiting list; and
- 14% of people surveyed had been transient for more than five years.

The StreetCount 2018 results highlight the need for Yarra to advocate and facilitate more affordable and social housing in inner Melbourne.

## Implications for the Yarra Housing Strategy

Yarra has a young, well educated population and workforce. Despite the relatively high income levels of residents in Yarra, renting is the most viable option for the majority of people, given the high costs associated with purchasing a home. While renting is the cheaper option of the two, the cost of rent is still high and can be unaffordable for many very low to moderate income households. The strategy should seek to encourage an increase in affordable housing options to maintain social diversity.

Yarra also has a highly transient population. While many people generally prefer to stay in the same area, a lack of suitable housing options, particularly for families, can make this difficult. New apartment developments in Yarra predominantly have two bedrooms and as such are typically occupied by lone person households. For all life stages and household types, people should be able to access housing that meets their needs. The strategy should consider how best to facilitate, at the planning and design stage, apartment developments that meet the needs of a wider range of household types.

