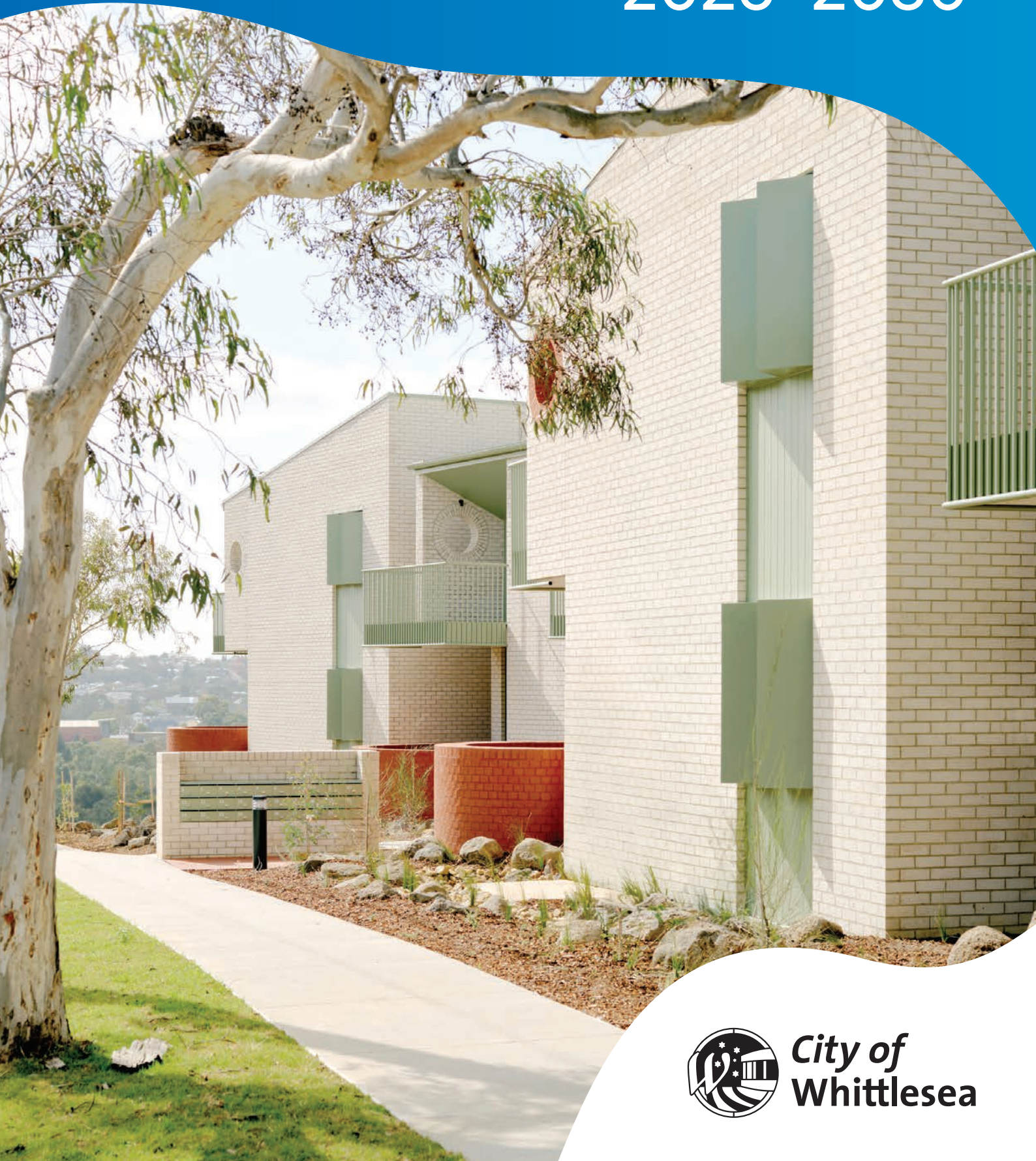


City of Whittlesea

Affordable Housing Plan 2025–2030



**City of
Whittlesea**



Artwork © Mandy Nicholson, 2017

Acknowledgement

We recognise the rich Aboriginal heritage of this country and acknowledge the Wurundjeri Willum Clan and Taungurung People as the Traditional Owners of lands within the City of Whittlesea.

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Front cover image: Social housing development in Belmont, Geelong delivered as part of the Victorian Government’s Big Housing Build initiative.

About this plan

Affordable, safe and secure housing is essential community infrastructure. It enables greater life opportunities, improves health and education outcomes, and underpins economic resilience. Affordable housing is a central pillar of a healthy and inclusive community.

The City of Whittlesea is committed to increasing supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of its residents. While demand is growing faster than supply and many residents are feeling the pressure of housing costs, this plan focuses on increasing the availability of well-designed, affordable homes so more people can find housing that meets their needs.

This plan is informed by up-to-date data on trends that are affecting housing affordability and security, as well as insights from engagement with residents.

This plan is designed to:

Engage the community

Help residents understand the complexities of housing affordability and the benefits affordable housing can bring to their neighbourhood. It also provides insight to the role of Council in supporting other levels of government to increase the provision of, and access to, affordable housing.

Support the private sector

Clarify the important role developers and the private sector can play in bridging the affordability gap, and outline the pathways and incentives that may be available to them. It outlines what Council will do to facilitate and incentivise affordable housing as part of development.

Reaffirm Council’s commitment

Reinforce Council’s dedication to play a role in addressing housing affordability and communicate this commitment clearly to developers and community housing organisations (CHOs).

Our goal

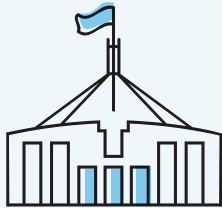
To increase the supply of affordable housing in the City of Whittlesea so that more people can access the quality homes they need.

About affordable housing

The housing system in Australia

Federal and state governments have identified the lack of affordable housing as one of the major economic and social issues facing the country, and have committed billions of dollars to addressing the issue. The housing system is complex and includes all levels of government, investors, and the building and construction sector among others.

Below outlines the policy frameworks that determine the scope of influence that each level of government has on housing markets and the supply of social and affordable housing.¹ This shows that local government has a relatively small yet still important role to play in increasing supply of social and affordable housing.

Level of government	Policy levers
 <p>Federal</p>	<p>Population settings</p> <p>Taxation settings</p> <p>Financial regulation</p> <p>Welfare support</p> <p>National Partnership funding for public housing and homelessness services (NPHA)</p> <p>Funding, including the Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)</p> <p>National Agreement on Social Housing and Homelessness (NASHH)</p>
 <p>State</p>	<p>Public housing – construction and management</p> <p>Community housing support and regulation</p> <p>Funding affordable housing</p> <p>Housing Policy</p> <p>Rental regulation</p> <p>Planning and Environment Act 1987, planning schemes and some planning decisions</p>
 <p>Local</p>	<p>Planning administration</p> <p>Local infrastructure</p> <p>Rates</p> <p>Housing Policy</p> <p>Use of Council-owned land for affordable housing</p> <p>Advocacy</p> <p>Partnerships to facilitate affordable housing</p>

¹ AHURI (2023), Understanding the housing policy levers of Commonwealth, state and territory, and local government, available: <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/analysis/brief/understanding-housing-policy-levers-commonwealth-state-and-territory-and-local-government>

What is affordable housing?

Affordable housing is a broad term describing housing (to buy or rent) that is suitable for the needs of very low-to moderate-income households.

Affordable housing is good-quality, fit-for-purpose housing, priced at a level that is affordable relative to the income of its occupants, while still allowing households to meet their other essential living costs.

‘Housing stress’ is defined as households on very low to moderate incomes pay more than 30 per cent of their gross income on housing costs.

The Planning and Environment Act 1987 defines affordable housing as being ‘housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following: very low income households, low income households, moderate income households’.

The definition is supported by a public notice and public order that specifies the income range classifications for very low-to moderate-income households. This data is updated yearly. Based on this definition, some private market housing may be considered affordable, depending on its price, property type, location and size. However, in many neighbourhoods, the private market is not providing enough affordable housing options and is generally not allocated explicitly to the households in need of affordable housing.

Housing affordability

Housing affordability is the relationship between expenditure on housing (prices, mortgage payments or rents) and household incomes, regardless of whether the housing is affordable housing or market housing.

Housing affordability is a significant issue across Australia as the increasing cost of housing outpaces relatively fixed household income. People are spending more on housing both in absolute terms and as a proportion of household income.

For the purposes of this plan, the term ‘affordable housing’ includes affordable housing provided through:



Social housing

is an umbrella term that includes both public housing and community housing for rent. It generally indicates housing that involves some degree of subsidy by government.



Public housing

is housing owned and managed by Homes Victoria, the state government agency that manages Victoria’s public housing system. The government provides public housing to eligible Victorians, including people who are unemployed, are on low incomes, live with a disability or a mental illness, or who are at risk of homelessness.



Community housing

is housing owned or managed by CHOs. CHOs are highly regulated, not-for-profit organisations that specialise in housing the diverse range of tenants who require both social and affordable homes.



Subsidised market housing

is housing provided by the private market through a range of subsidy types. Subsidies may support the rental or ownership of housing.

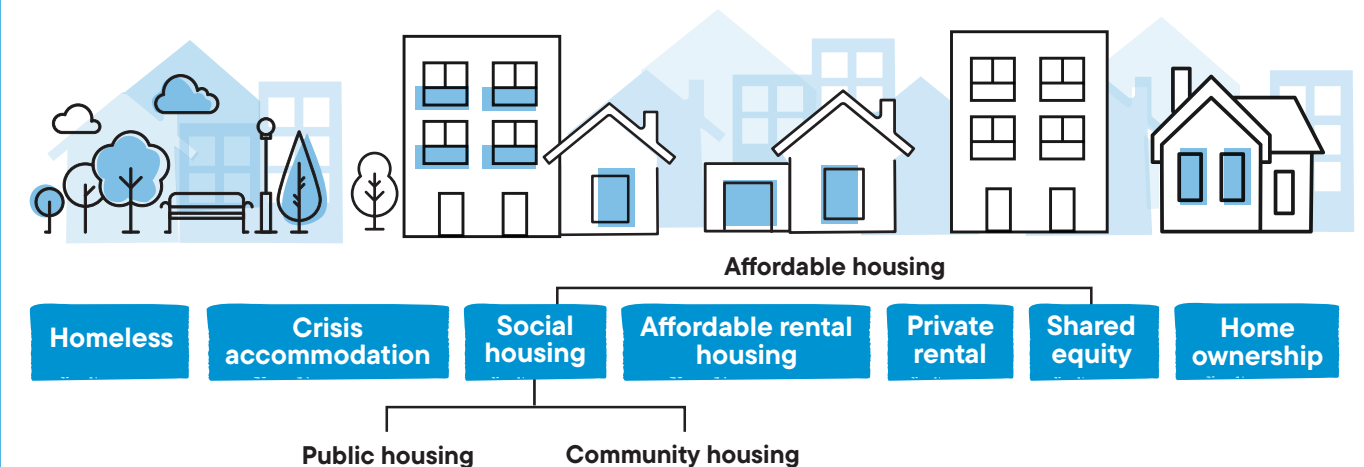
The Victorian Housing Register

The Victorian Housing Register (VHR) is the register of people seeking social housing in Victoria. Social housing is made up of public housing (managed by the state government) and community housing. The register has two categories:

- Priority Access – for people who are homeless and receiving support, are escaping or have escaped family violence, are living with a disability or significant support needs, or need to move for health reasons
- Register of Interest – for people who do not meet the Priority Access criteria but are seeking to live in social housing.



The housing continuum



The housing continuum clarifies what housing affordability in the City of Whittlesea includes. It illustrates the range of housing options available in the community, recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to housing. Many factors influence an individual’s or household’s ability to access housing, making it essential for the market to offer a diverse range of housing options to meet these varying needs.

Who is affordable housing for?

A wide range of people may need affordable housing at some point during their lives. Affordable housing is for anyone who is part of a very low-, low-or moderate-income household.

Households qualify as eligible for affordable housing based on household income. Table 1 shows the income ranges specified in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as of July. These figures are updated annually by the state government.

There are some useful definitions that help us better understand who affordable housing is for.

This plan uses the following definitions:



Key workers

are workers who perform essential services for a society. They include teachers, nurses, childcare and aged-care workers, and emergency services personnel. They also includes workers such as cleaning, hospitality and retail workers.



People experiencing homelessness

lack one or more elements that represent ‘home’. This includes people who reside: in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping outdoors (rough sleepers); in supported accommodation for the homeless; temporarily with other households (couch surfing); in boarding houses; in severely crowded dwellings.



People in marginal housing

live in rental accommodation that relies on shared facilities and offers limited tenancy rights. It includes some boarding and rooming houses that do not fall within the homelessness category, and some secondary dwellings such as granny flats and caravan parks.

Table 1: Annual income ranges for households to be eligible for affordable housing as of July 2024.

Household	Very low-income range	Low-income range	Moderate-income range
Single adult	Up to \$30,640	\$30,641 to \$49,020	\$49,021 to \$73,530
Couple, no dependants	Up to \$45,950	\$45,951 to \$73,530	\$73,531 to \$110,300
Family (with one or two parents) and dependant children	Up to \$64,330	\$64,331 to \$102,950	\$102,951 to \$154,410

Misconceptions about affordable housing

There are some common misconceptions about affordable housing. However, research consistently shows that affordable housing has positive social and economic impacts on local neighbourhoods and communities.

Misconception 1:

Affordable housing does not belong in my neighbourhood

Affordable housing helps key workers, families, older residents, and many others live close to jobs, services and support networks. This supports a diverse, inclusive community and can contribute to the local economy by supporting a stable workforce. Affordable housing also reduces homelessness and housing stress, leading to better health and social outcomes.²

Misconception 2:

Affordable housing will lower surrounding property values

Studies have found that affordable housing does not reduce nearby property values. Well-designed, maintained and managed affordable housing is often indistinguishable from market housing and can even enhance neighbourhoods through investment and renewal.³

Misconception 3:

The people living in these homes won't fit in with our local community

Most likely, the people who will live in these new homes already live in or have connections with, the area – for example, they may work in the area, have family in, the area, or may have grown up in the area. Additionally, community housing organisations often lead community development projects such as community hubs.

Misconception 4:

Affordable housing will affect safety of neighbouring residents

There is no evidence that providing affordable housing affects community safety. In fact, research confirms that there is no link between new affordable housing and crime.

² Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (2023), National social housing survey 2023, available: <https://www.aihw.gov.au/reports/housing-assistance/national-social-housing-survey-2023/contents/benefits-of-living-in-social-housing>
³ AHURI (2013), Understanding and addressing community opposition to affordable housing development, available: <https://www.ahuri.edu.au/research/final-reports/211>

Affordable housing and good design

Good design enhances the functionality, efficiency, sustainability and overall liveability of neighborhoods, streets and homes.

Good design ensures that buildings are well- integrated into their surroundings, creating spaces that are not only better connected to their environment but also more enjoyable for users.

It makes economic sense and is more sustainable to ensure that affordable housing is designed with the same attention to quality, capitalising on the community benefits that this essential infrastructure provides. Everyone has the right to feel safe, comfortable and private in their home.

Key characteristics of a well-designed affordable home:

- responds to the site context and surrounding urban fabric
- maximises solar access for natural light and warmth
- optimises natural ventilation to improve air quality
- energy efficient to reduce consumption and costs
- reduces the user's carbon footprint through features like solar panels and rainwater tanks
- utilises locally sourced materials to minimise environmental impact
- uses durable materials to stand the test of time
- seamlessly connects indoor and outdoor spaces
- encourages social connections within the community
- fit for its intended purpose
- adaptable floor plans to respond to different needs of residents
- easy to maintain, operate and navigate
- private and quiet
- creates a pleasurable and comfortable living environment
- visually appealing and enhances the aesthetic of the area
- tenure blind – where affordable housing is visually indistinguishable from private housing.

Research has shown that well-lit spaces contribute to better mental health, with users of such spaces reporting lower instances of depression and anxiety. A well-designed, naturally lit home feels more spacious and promotes comfort.⁴ Thermal comfort is equally important, helping to reduce illness and even prevent fatalities, particularly among vulnerable populations.⁵

It also cuts down on energy costs associated with heating and cooling. Additionally, accessible and usable outdoor spaces encourage movement and recreation, supporting the well-being of residents, especially children.

Ultimately, good design elevates the entire neighbourhood. It enhances community amenity, fosters civic pride and nurtures a sense of belonging that contributes to greater social cohesion. Well-designed affordable housing can improve street safety by increasing natural surveillance. It even has the potential to set a high design standard for surrounding developments to achieve.

⁴ Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2023), Good Design, available: <https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/good-design>

⁵ Office of the Victorian Government Architect (2019), The case for good design, available: <https://www.ovga.vic.gov.au/sites/default/files/2020-09/OVGA-Case-for-good-design%20%281%29.pdf>

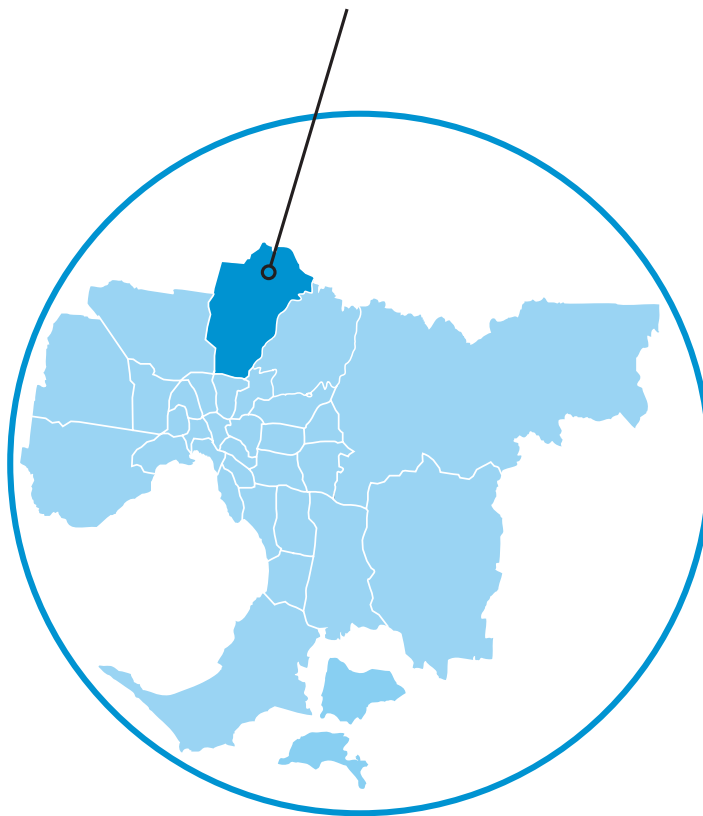


Top: Social housing development in Belmont, Geelong delivered as part of the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build initiative. *Image supplied by Housing Choices Australia.* **Above:** Apartment interior of social housing development in Belmont, Geelong delivered as part of the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build initiative. *Image supplied by Housing Choices Australia.*

Snapshot of City of Whittlesea

The City of Whittlesea is located in Melbourne's northern suburbs, about 20 kilometres from the city centre.

CITY OF WHITTLESEA



It is one of Melbourne's largest municipalities, covering a land area of approximately 490 square kilometres. It is estimated to have a current population of 250,000 people with more than 75,000 households.

A city in its own right, with a thriving and growing economic base, it includes rural areas to the north, the emerging neighbourhoods and suburbs in the greenfield areas and the established suburbs to the south.



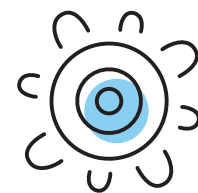
Our population continues to grow

A population of **257,000** in 2025, projected to be **355,000** by 2040 – a 38% increase.⁶



We're a diverse and multicultural community

37.6 per cent of residents were born overseas⁷ and **45 per cent** speak a language other than English at home.⁷



We have a growing First Peoples population

38 per cent increase from 2016 to 2021.⁷



We're home to many young families

54 per cent of households are families with children. **27 per cent** of the population is under 19.⁸



We have a growing older population

17 per cent of our population is over 60.⁶ Our median age is expected to shift from 35 to 39 by 2040.⁹



Population **doubled** in the last 20 years in the City of Whittlesea.

⁶ Population projections for City of Whittlesea from .id, 2024

⁷ Population projections for City of Whittlesea from .id, 2024

⁸ Population forecast, Place Info Pty Ltd, 2025

⁹ Population forecast, Place Info Pty Ltd, 2025

Affordable housing in City of Whittlesea

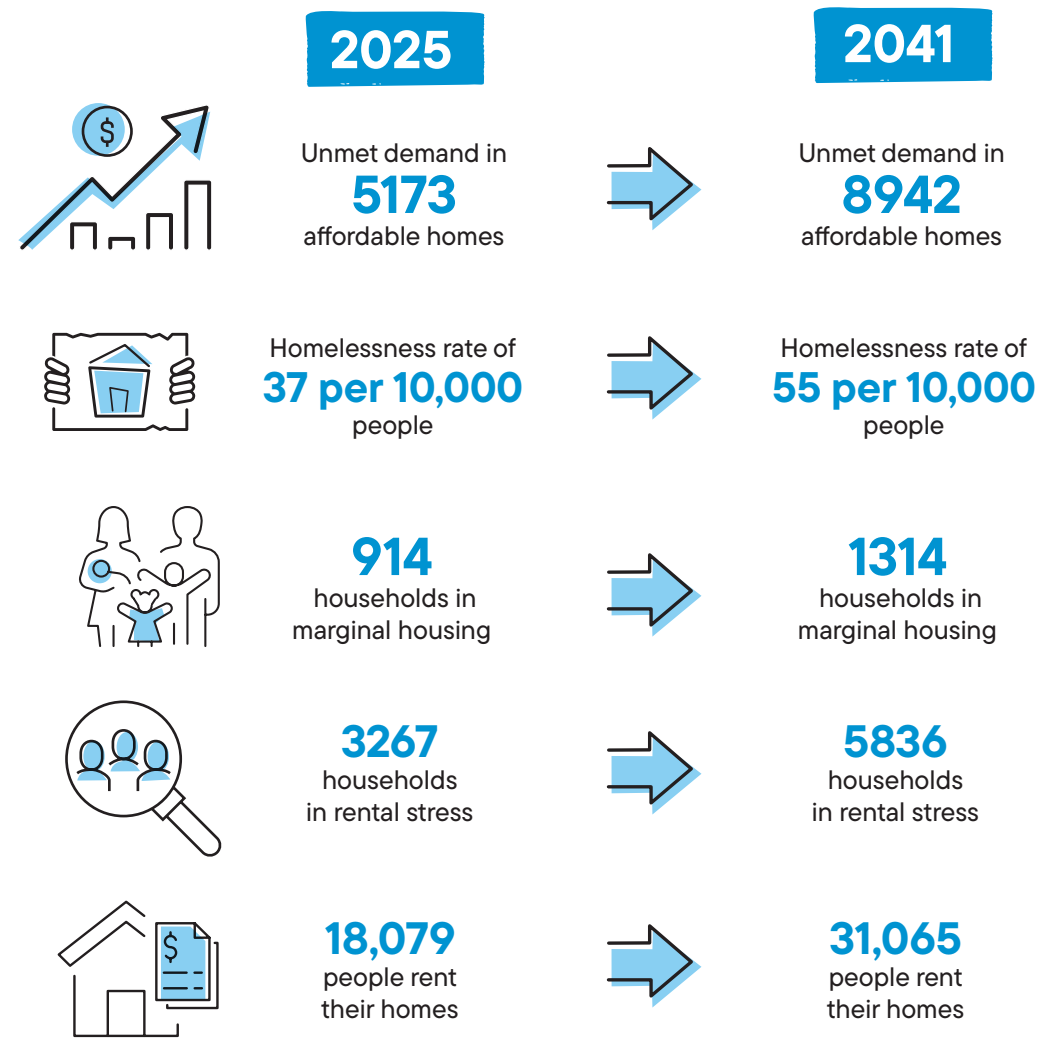
To meet the growing demand in the City of Whittlesea, 15 per cent of all new dwellings will need to be affordable housing.

The City of Whittlesea needs more affordable housing. In 2025, more than 5000 households had an unmet need for affordable housing. This represented 6.1 per cent of all households.

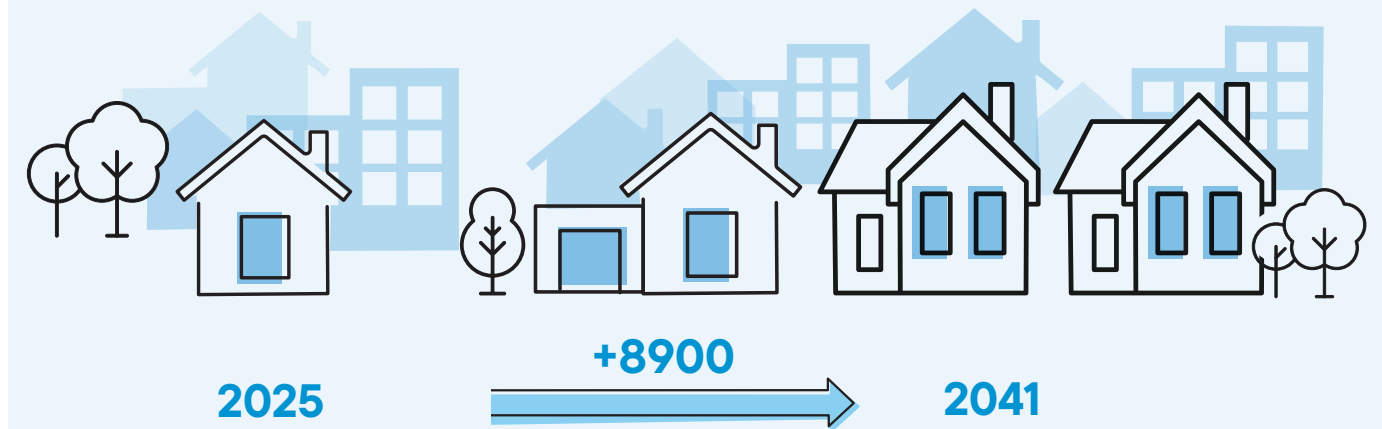
Supply in the City of Whittlesea is also low. Just 1.6 per cent of households rent social housing, compared to the Melbourne average of 2.3 per cent.

Rental affordability is also steadily declining – new rentals affordable to people on low-incomes fell from 19.7 per cent in 2014 to 6.7 per cent in 2024¹¹.

The City of Whittlesea engaged Insight Demographics to prepare a forecast of demand for affordable housing to 2041¹². Below are some of the key findings of what could happen if nothing is done to address housing affordability:

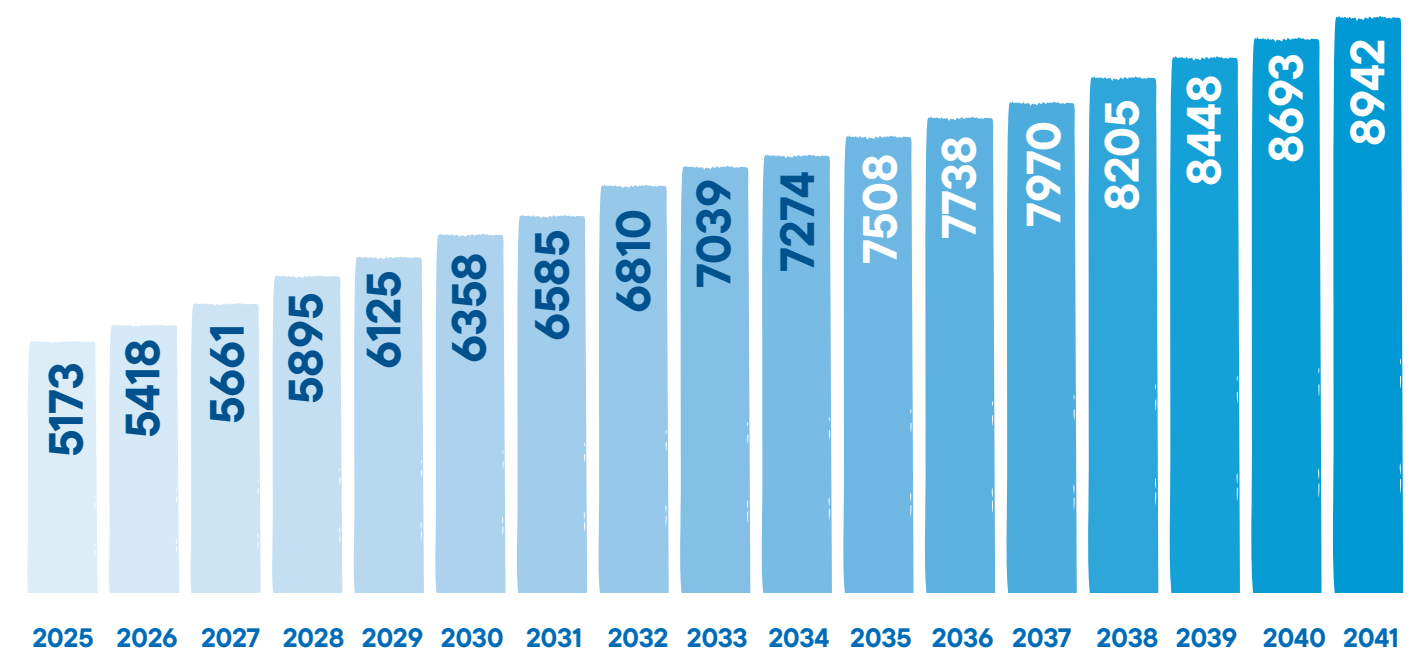


We need to build **8900** affordable homes by 2041 to meet demand



That's **560** new affordable homes per year – or **15 per cent** of all new homes.

Graph 2: Forecast unmet need for affordable housing in City of Whittlesea by 2041.



¹⁰ Homes Victoria (2024), supplied data

¹¹ Department of Families, Fairness and Housing Victoria (2025), Rental Report, available: <https://www.dffh.vic.gov.au/publications/rental-report>

¹² City of Whittlesea (2025), analysis and forecasting



Case study

Within the Epping Renewal Site, developed by Riverlee and named New Epping, 151 affordable homes have been delivered in partnership with Haven Home Safe.

The new mixed-use development in the heart of Epping Central is set to deliver a diverse range of housing options, including affordable and social housing, close to key services and infrastructure. Recognising the strategic importance of Epping as one of Melbourne's fastest-growing suburbs, the Victorian Government identified the Epping Metropolitan Activity Centre in September 2023 as one of 10 priority locations across the state where planning rules would be streamlined to accelerate housing supply.

Council played a pivotal role in shaping this development by establishing the planning controls that guide land use and development outcomes.

In collaboration with the developer, Council also negotiated a voluntary agreement to dedicate 15 per cent of the total dwellings to affordable housing—comprising 10 per cent affordable and 5 per cent social housing—ensuring that the benefits of growth are shared across the community.

The Epping Renewal Site is ideally located near major amenities such as the Northern Hospital, Northern Private Hospital, Pacific Epping shopping centre, Melbourne Polytechnic and the Cooper Street Employment Area, including the Melbourne Wholesale Fruit, Vegetable & Flower Market. These facilities make Epping a highly attractive and well-connected place to live, work and study.

Once complete, the development will deliver approximately 2,000 homes, offering a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom dwellings, from townhouses to apartments. Stage 1 was completed in December 2022, with 151 well-designed apartments handed over to Haven Home Safe, a registered community housing provider. These homes meet Better Apartment Design Standards and achieve at least a silver rating under the Liveable Housing Australia guidelines.

Through strategic planning and partnership, Council has helped ensure that the Epping Renewal Site will become a thriving, inclusive and sustainable community with strong access to jobs, services and high-quality amenities.

“

Community quote:

“Through our valued partnership with Haven Home Safe, we’ve been able to deliver purpose-built rental housing in a vibrant, connected setting adjacent to our local park and the onsite Grounders Cafe. Our inaugural residents are the first to experience what will become an increasingly dynamic community as we continue to deliver on the long-term vision for New Epping.”

– Ben Rowe, Project Director,
Riverlee



“

Community quote:

“I love the fact that there are all ages in this building... My new apartment is not just a roof over my head; it's home and I love it.”

– Cathy,
New Epping Resident



“

Community quote:

“I was surprised to see that it is so modern... One of my favourite things is the community spirit we got here.”

–Rex,
New Epping Resident



Council's long-standing commitment

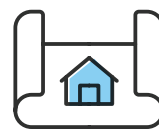
City of Whittlesea has a long-standing commitment to increase the supply of social and affordable housing in the municipality, having adopted its first Social and Affordable Housing Policy and Strategy in 2012.

Achievements:

- amending the Whittlesea Planning Scheme to include targets for 5 per cent social housing and 10 per cent affordable housing in the structure planning of any established or greenfield housing development
- negotiating agreements for more than 600 new affordable housing dwellings
- leasing Council land in Wollert and partnering with a registered community housing provider to deliver 27 new affordable dwellings
- partnering with Hope Street Youth and Family services to facilitate crisis accommodation that supports 100 young people experiencing homelessness each year.

Partnering with Council to deliver affordable housing

City of Whittlesea welcomes collaboration with CHOs and developers to help deliver more affordable housing in our municipality. There are several ways to get involved:



Planning process

Developers can work with Council during the planning permit process to incorporate affordable housing into private developments, including through negotiated planning outcomes under Section 173 agreements.



Funding opportunities

Council will support proposals that make use of innovative design and delivery models in applying for Federal and State funding programs. We encourage early engagement to explore how Council can facilitate these opportunities.



Use of Council land

Council is exploring opportunities to make suitable land available for affordable housing projects. CHOs and developers interested in partnering on these sites are encouraged to register their interest through future expressions of interest (EOI) processes.



Top: Apartment interior of Housing Choices Australia's St Albans social housing development. *Image supplied by Housing Choices Australia.*

Above: Housing Choices Australia's St Albans social housing development. *Image supplied by Housing Choices Australia.*



Indicative view of the proposed streetscape along De Rossi Boulevard.

Case study

Leveraging Council land for affordable housing

Using Council-owned land for affordable housing is a smart, cost-effective strategy to address housing shortages. It transforms underutilised land into community value, avoids costly land purchases, aligns with local priorities, and demonstrates strong leadership in tackling the housing crisis.

The City of Whittlesea is responding to a critical shortage of affordable housing through the Ashline Street Project in Wollert. Council is leasing land to Beyond Housing to deliver 27 high-quality homes for people experiencing housing stress, prioritising those with strong local ties.

Project objectives

- Increase supply for vulnerable cohorts: families, older people, women, key workers and people with disabilities.
- Neighbourhood integration: Homes designed to blend with existing character and remain under two storeys.
- Community benefit: Include an outdoor community space managed by Council and connected to the adjacent Kirrip Community Centre.
- Local allocation: Prioritise residents with local connections.
- Sustainability and quality: Deliver durable, well-designed homes with water-efficient landscaping.

Why Beyond Housing?

Following an expression of interest process, Council selected Beyond Housing for its proven track record in managing affordable housing and its proactive approach to community engagement. Beyond Housing worked closely with local residents to shape the design of the homes and the shared community space.

Community-informed design features

- Varied exterior colour palettes with durable materials complementing neighbouring homes.
- Low street-front fencing with planting behind for an attractive streetscape.
- Hardy, low-maintenance landscaping using a mix of native and non-native species.
- Garages with roller doors replacing the originally proposed carports.
- An open outdoor community space combining garden, seating, and play areas, as preferred by the community.



Map showing the site in relation to surrounding streets and amenities.



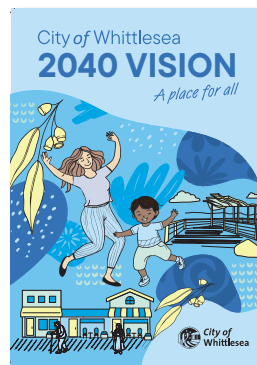
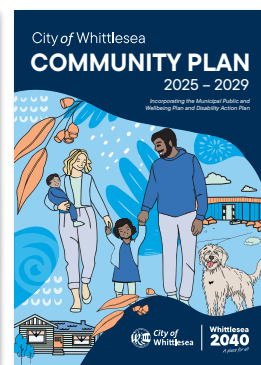
Render showing the main entry point from Highpark Drive.



Aerial image showing the overall layout of the development.

How this plan was developed

This plan builds on our past success and articulates our future commitment to growing affordable housing supply. It has been developed through our Integrated Planning Framework (IPF). The IPF is a three-tiered approach that provides our community with clear information on Council's priorities and our overall strategic direction.



Level 1: Whittlesea 2040: A place for all

Is Council's long-term vision for the community. It includes the need for more affordable housing in the municipality. A home is the foundation for each of us to participate in our community. City of Whittlesea recognises that housing is a human right that contributes positively to individual and community safety and wellbeing.



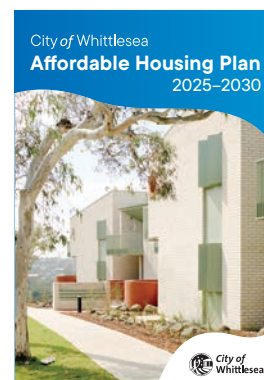
Level 2: The Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy (LNS)

Outlines Council's overall strategic direction across four areas related to liveable neighbourhoods: public space and infrastructure; activity centres; integrated transport; and housing. Key Direction 3: Housing for diverse needs, includes social and affordable housing options for people vulnerable to housing insecurity as a priority.

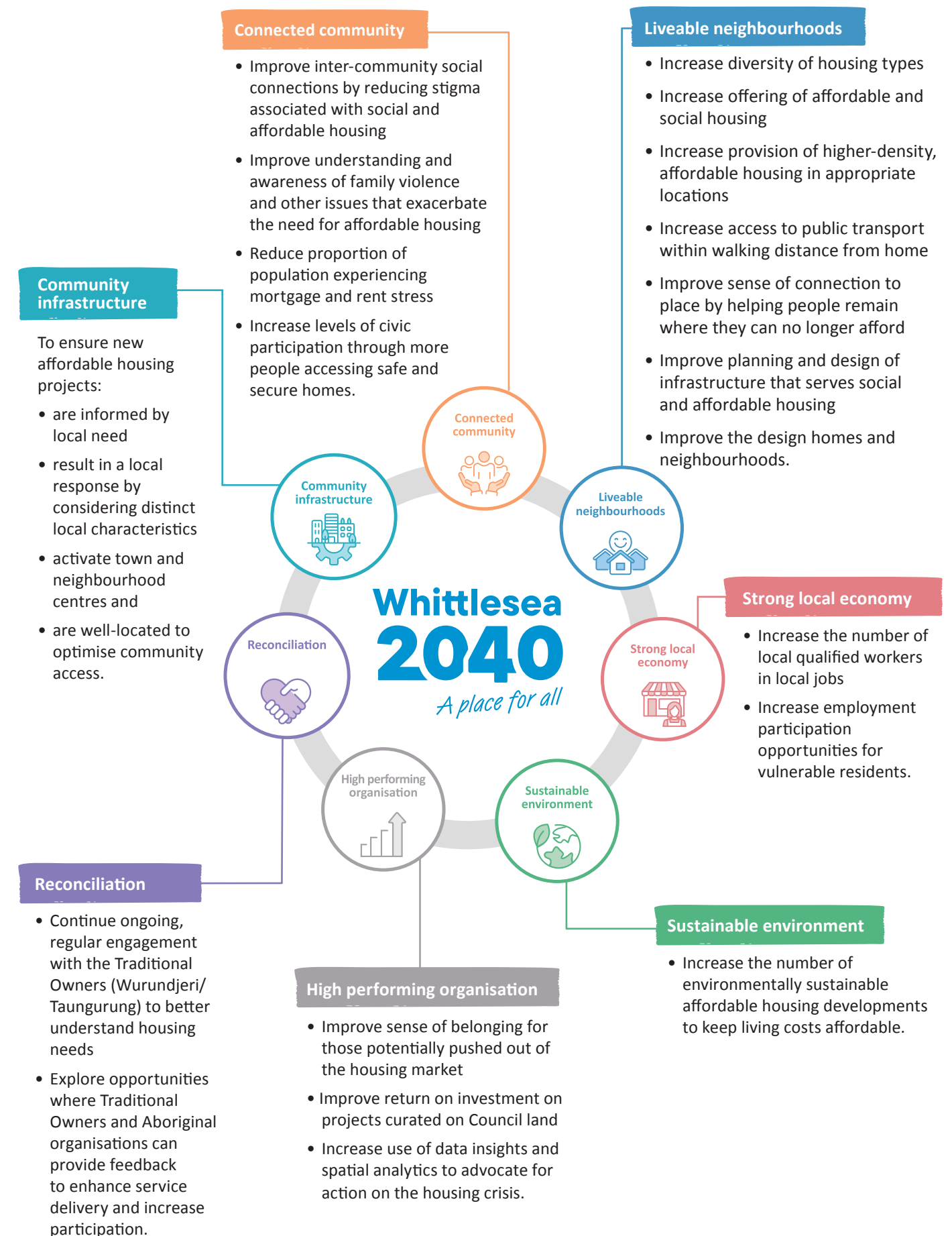


Level 3: Affordable Housing Plan

Council will implement its vision relating to increasing the supply of affordable housing to meet the needs of our growing and diverse community.



How the affordable housing plan aligns with our other strategies



Why does Council need an affordable housing plan?



Federal and state governments have identified the lack of affordable housing as one of the major economic and social issues facing the country, and have committed billions of dollars to addressing the issue.



In 2025, it is estimated that 5173 households (6.1 per cent) will have an unmet need for affordable housing in the City of Whittlesea local government area. This is expected to grow to 8942 households (8.1% of all housing) by 2041.



Demand is growing faster than supply and all levels of government, as well as the private sector, must act to reverse this trend to ensure that affordable housing options are available to all people.



The City of Whittlesea has a vital role in shaping the future of housing for its community. While federal and state governments bear the primary responsibility for delivering and maintaining social and affordable housing, local governments have an integral role in advocating for, planning and driving initiatives that create more affordable homes for our community.



What the community says about affordable housing

The Community Insights Study collects information about a range of topics through surveys. These surveys are designed to help us get a better understanding of what is changing over time to ensure our local communities remain a great place to live. Each round of the survey explores different aspects of community life.



More than **74 per cent** of respondents believe affordable housing should be part of future neighbourhoods.



63 per cent of respondents believe Council should advocate for more state and federal government funding.

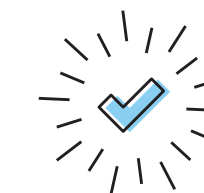
Respondents could choose more than one option



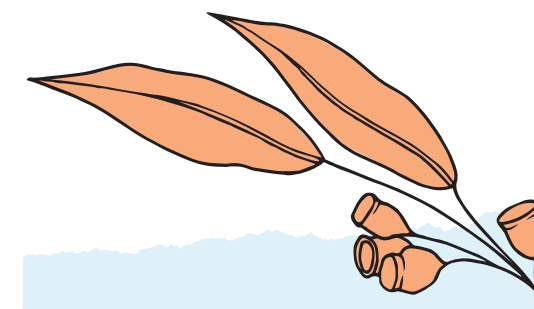
More than **60 per cent** of people think affordable housing is an issue in the City of Whittlesea.



80 per cent of respondents are homeowners either outright or with a mortgage.



Young people are more likely to believe affordable housing is a priority than older age groups.



The Community Insights survey shows that the community believes housing affordability is an issue and that we need affordable housing in both our established and future neighbourhoods.

Making it happen

Policy statements

The following policy statements define Council’s role and values in addressing unmet need for affordable housing. These statements help guide our work and how we will measure our progress.

Housing is a human right

The City of Whittlesea affirms that housing is a fundamental human right that contributes to individual and community safety and wellbeing¹⁴. Affordable housing for very-low, low- and moderate-income households is essential community infrastructure, important for the diversity of neighbourhoods, social cohesion and community prosperity. We are committed to working in partnership to encourage and facilitate affordable housing outcomes that meet the diverse needs of our current and future population.

This plan is underpinned by a human rights framework and local government’s obligations under the Victorian Charter of *Human Rights and Responsibilities Act 2006*, reflecting that the provision of adequate housing is an essential human need.

Housing insecurity disproportionately affects some groups more than others

Every person has a right to safe, affordable and appropriate housing to enable their participation in community life. People across all life stages can find themselves in need of affordable housing at any time.

While there are many households within the City of Whittlesea that need affordable housing, there are some people who are particularly vulnerable to housing insecurity or may find it more difficult to find stable, affordable and appropriate housing. These groups include younger and older people, women, First Nations peoples, people living with disability, and LGBTIQ+ communities.

Council will take an intersectional lens to its housing work, recognising that overlapping forms of disadvantage can compound housing insecurity. In doing so, Council endorses the Mana-na woorn-tyeen maar-takoort framework, supporting culturally safe and self-determined housing outcomes for First Nations peoples.

State and federal governments have primary responsibility for addressing housing affordability

Council is committed to increasing supply of affordable housing in the municipality, however the primary responsibility for this rests with the state and federal governments as defined in the Victorian *Housing Act 1983* and the Commonwealth *Housing Australia Act 2018*. State and federal governments have the authority for coordinated and larger scale market interventions.

Council will actively seek funding to deliver affordable housing across the municipality, through Homes Victoria and Housing Australia.

Council will model best-practice affordable housing delivery

We are committed to demonstrating best practice housing development in the municipality. We will apply standardised guidelines that balance social, commercial, environmental outcomes in all our residential projects. This will include maximising affordable housing outcomes by examining the inclusion of a minimum provision of 5 per cent social and 10 per cent affordable housing on every project that includes housing on Council land.

Council will partner with community housing organisations (CHOs) to deliver new affordable housing

CHOs have become the key delivery agents of affordable housing in Victoria. They are a diverse group of not-for-profits that have been providing affordable rental homes for more than 30 years. The sector now manages some 20,000 affordable homes across the state.

In any project on its own land, Council will partner with CHOs to deliver and manage affordable housing. Council will continue to build on its previous commitment of offering CHOs discounts of 15–20 per cent on market price (on a case-by-case basis) for the sale of land and access to long-term discounted leases.

Everyone has a role to play

It is not just government and the not-for-profit sector that are responsible for delivering new affordable housing. The private sector and the community must also play their part to increase supply of affordable housing in the long term. The private sector must deliver new developments that are diverse, inclusive and affordable so that our municipality is a place for everyone. Council will work with developers to encourage 15 per cent of all new housing to be affordable to meet future demand. Communities play a vital role in creating sustainable neighbourhoods and can advocate for the inclusion of affordable housing to help meet this growing need.

¹⁴ Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (1996), International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights - Article 11, available: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>

Key directions

To respond to the increasing demand for affordable housing in the municipality, the City of Whittlesea will focus its work within three key directions to deliver more affordable homes.



Key direction 1: Research and advocate

High quality and up-to-date research can help Council understand current and future housing demand and trends, allowing it to tailor its work program and advocacy accordingly.

Under this key direction Council will:

- continue to research current and future housing need and affordability trends to inform planning
- advocate for increased public and private investment in affordable housing
- advocate to state government for stronger mandatory affordable housing provisions within the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* and the Whittlesea Planning Scheme
- advocate to use state government-owned land for affordable housing projects.



Key direction 2: Partner and incentivise

Partnering with key stakeholders across the industry enables us to combine resources, knowledge and skillsets within the local area to tackle the availability and affordability of housing. This can include:

- being part of, or leading, a local or regional housing working group
- sharing ideas, research and resources with other local stakeholders such as developers, CHOs and other councils
- connecting local stakeholders such as developers, CHOs and potential funding partners.

Under this key direction Council will:

- work with the community, developers and relevant stakeholders to foster a greater understanding of the essential role affordable housing plays in building cohesive communities and great neighbourhoods
- collaborate with registered community housing organisations (CHOs) to support their efforts in delivering affordable housing
- partner with neighbouring local governments, including Hume City Council and Mitchell Shire Council, and through the Victorian Inter-Council Affordable Housing Forum, to address housing challenges regionally
- explore cost-reduction avenues to support CHOs to provide more affordable housing and to encourage more developers to include an affordable housing component in their developments.



Key direction 3: Facilitate and deliver

Both as a landowner and responsible authority, Council plays an influential role in the quantity and quality of homes that get built across our municipality. Council can encourage the development of social and affordable housing both within its own land through the private sector and not for profit sector.

Under this key direction Council will:

- proactively pursue federal and state funding opportunities to deliver affordable housing in our municipality
- encourage affordable housing to be located in proximity of a network of metropolitan, major and neighbourhood activity centres
- review Council's property portfolio to identify a pipeline of priority sites that are suitable for affordable housing
- investigate long-term ownership and operating models for Council-led delivery of affordable housing.





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