

Social and Affordable Housing

Victorian Local Government Position Statement

Introduction

This **Victorian Local Government Social and Affordable Housing Position Statement** presents a state-wide local government position on social and affordable housing.

It affirms local government's role in supporting the considerable investment and support delivered by the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments through their respective responsibilities confirmed in the [National Housing and Homeless Agreement](#).

A respectful and formal partnership between the Victorian Government and local government will provide a strong foundation to timely and necessary provision of more social and affordable housing across the state. This statement defines the elements and actions local government would like to see dealt with in the Social and Affordable Housing Compact, which the Victorian Government [committed](#) to developing in November 2020.

The Position Statement draws on the extensive policy work of councils and feedback on a draft strategic statement released in November 2021. It also reflects MAV State Council resolutions on social and affordable housing and submissions developed by the MAV in consultation with councils.

Position Statement

- Councils are fundamentally concerned about the health and wellbeing of their communities. When social and affordable housing is integrated into the urban landscape it supports improved life outcomes, access to education, jobs and services, and better mental and physical health.
- The significant shortage of affordable housing across Victoria is a cause for great concern. All communities are impacted, whether it be young people not able to consider owning their own home, communities unable to house key workers, or those who can't find a bed for the night.
- Respectful and genuine consultation needs to occur between all three levels of government. Commonwealth tax and income support policies and specific purpose funding to state and territory governments have a direct impact. The Victorian Government's investment in, and provision of social housing dwellings is recognised, and its role in funding community programs and direct supports for people on the Housing Register, state supported residential services and crisis accommodation.

Note: This Statement was developed through consultation with all Victorian councils in late 2021 and early 2022. It will be revised if there are new Federal and Victorian Government housing strategies and policy announcements which have significant implications for local government.

- The Victorian government is responsible for funding and maintaining social and affordable housing dwellings it owns. We oppose any unilateral imposition of rate exemptions.
- Any proposed changes to legislation regarding councils bearing the costs of social housing dwellings, including rate exemptions, must be developed collaboratively with the local government sector and without retrospective application
- Councils support implementation of planning mechanisms, including inclusionary zoning, that enable councils to seek mandatory affordable housing contributions from developers in a form directed by council of either land, dwellings, or cash contributions
- Councils are essential partners in the creation and ongoing sustainability of social and affordable housing. Council's role must be acknowledged, and councils must be properly resourced to fulfill necessary planning, support and community development functions they need to play to support their communities.
- Homelessness, including rough sleeping and primary homelessness is a growing issue in local communities. Councils seek a genuine partnership with the Victorian government and the community sector to understand and address causes of homelessness and insecure housing, support collective approaches to rough sleeping and develop and deliver early intervention and prevention programs.
- A broad, whole of government housing strategy is urgently needed to deliver housing across the spectrum of need. A Victorian housing strategy needs to address:
 - How state government agencies will coordinate to address housing shortages of crisis, affordable, key worker, and supported and unsupported social housing
 - Delivery of early intervention and prevention initiatives and services that support tenant sustainment
 - Formalised partnership arrangements between state and local government, underpinned by an agreement (Compact) which includes a mechanism to engage across the range of state agencies that influence social and affordable housing policy
 - How local housing needs will be addressed, including how funds levied locally will provide continuing community benefit
 - How councils can shape local targets for both housing and support provision
 - Inclusion of local government in governance structures that underpin the strategy's implementation
 - A state-wide public awareness and community education campaign, matched with municipal engagement is needed urgently to encourage communities to be actively involved the planning and delivery of social and affordable housing

New partnership approach for new investments

Councils have welcomed and are actively involved in the delivery of the Big Housing Build. They also recognise that diverse and sustainable funding streams are needed to ensure continued growth in social and affordable housing. This is best progressed through formalised mechanisms with local government.

Social and affordable housing design and location must conform with local planning policy and be informed by local community input. Council social and affordable housing strategies or policies, where they exist, must be taken into consideration when a project is being considered

The development of a Social and Affordable Housing Compact with the Victorian Government provides an opportunity to address long standing planning and program issues including:

- Alignment of planning frameworks to ensure that the 10 Year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy and local planning policies complement each other and support best outcomes
- Local government and MAV participation on inter-departmental working groups to maximise local insights to inform necessary state responses
- Coordination of the broad range of services, supports and infrastructure for people who live in social and affordable housing, including flexibility for local arrangements for rate exemptions for social housing provided by Homes Victoria and community housing associations
- Shared planning around building renewal and development of state owned and managed public housing to ensure they conform to local planning schemes and are fully integrated into the urban landscape, including environmentally sustainable design
- Development of a shared social and affordable housing data and monitoring system that provides transparency and a basis for joint planning
- Trialling of different models of social and affordable housing provision including build to rent, shared equity schemes, and housing first and foyer models.

Putting our position in place

This Position Statement guides the development of the proposed Victorian State and Local Government Social and Affordable Compact, our response to the Victorian Ten-Year Affordable Housing Strategy, and our engagement with the Big Housing Build.

Councils are encouraged to adopt this Position Statement either in full, or as a guide to the development of local or regional policy.

The Statement will be revised in consultation with Councils when necessary, and in response to changing policy.

May 2022

Reference information:

- [MAV Submission Parliamentary Inquiry into Housing Supply and Affordability](#)
- [MAV Submission re Establishing a 10 Year Strategy for Social and Affordable Housing](#)
- [MAV Submission to Ministerial Advisory Committee on Planning Mechanisms for Affordable Housing](#)
- [MAV/FinPro Issues Paper "Social and Affordable Housing and Funding for Local Services"](#)