



WARRNAMBOOL  
CITY COUNCIL

# **Affordable Housing Policy**

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Purpose and Scope

The estimated resident population of Warrnambool is currently 33,900 (June 2011). This is forecast to increase to more than 44,000 by 2030. This population growth is largely being driven by economic growth across the region which in turn has impacted negatively on housing affordability. In 2000 the median property price in Warrnambool was \$128,000. By 2010 this had risen almost 250% to \$322,000. This is mirrored in the residential rental market, with Warrnambool having amongst the highest prices across all regional cities in Victoria.

The 2009 – 2013 Council Plan outlines the strategic objectives of Council, these include:

- A leading regional city;
- An environmentally sustainable city;
- A liveable city; and
- A city of growth

Council recognises that these objectives have the potential to compete, an example being the need to keep housing affordable during periods of significant economic growth. Council committed in the 2009 – 2013 Council Plan to “facilitate the development of affordable housing policy in Warrnambool”. This policy fulfils that obligation.

The purpose of this Policy is to provide the community and Council staff with an understanding of the Warrnambool City Council objectives and approach to addressing housing affordability in Warrnambool.

### 1.2 Definitions

Affordable housing	Housing that is both affordable and appropriate for resident household. Housing is affordable when it does not demand so much of a household’s income as to leave them with insufficient money to meet other household needs.
Appropriate housing	Housing that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provides security of tenure</li> <li>• Is appropriate for that household in terms of size, quality, accessibility and location</li> <li>• Is integrated within a reasonably diverse local community</li> <li>• Minimises costs relating to maintenance, utilities and transport</li> </ul>
Mortgage / rental stress	Experienced by low income households (80% median income) when more than 30% of gross household income is expended on rent or 35% on mortgage payments.

## 2. REFERENCES

### 2.1 Internal Council Documents

- WCC Council Plan
- WCC Health & Wellbeing Plan

- WCC Planning Scheme

## 2.2 External References

- Victorian Homelessness Action Plan

## 3. POLICY

- 3.1** Warrnambool City Council (Council) recognises that access to affordable housing is a basic human right and a determinant of community health and wellbeing. It acknowledges that the impacts of unaffordable housing are unevenly distributed across the community with lone parents, single people, young people, older people (>65 years) and children of lone parents experiencing the worst outcomes.

Affordable housing also has significant impacts on the liveability and economic prosperity of the community. A lack of affordable housing has a negative impact on workforce attraction and is a barrier to attracting tertiary students to the City.

Council will work hard with other stakeholders within the community to achieve the following objectives:

**Objective 1: Promote community health and wellbeing**

Advocate for a sufficient supply of social and public housing to prevent homelessness and social isolation and meet community needs.

**Objective 2: Sustainable housing supply and design**

Support best practice urban planning and design that results in a diverse, safe and sustainable housing supply that responds to the needs of local residents.

**Objective 3: Maintain a liveable community**

Ensure that residential housing strategy supports appropriate access to employment, education, cultural, recreational, health and social services.

**Objective 4: Promoting economic development**

Ensure that access to affordable housing is not a barrier to future economic development.

### 3.2 Council's role in working to achieve affordable housing for the community includes:

**Advocacy**

- Influencing State and Federal Government policy
- Advocating for additional government funds for social and public housing
- Highlighting changes in demographics and household types to ensure new housing stock responds to trends in household type and size.
- Encouraging investment in diverse and appropriate housing types by developers
- Supporting individuals experiencing problems with navigating government housing services

**Partnership development**

- Facilitating partnerships with government, developers and the community to develop new cooperative solutions and initiatives to meet local housing needs

## Advice

- Raising awareness of government schemes and incentives and facilitating access where appropriate
- Providing advice to the public on best practice urban design and residential development, environmental sustainability etc..

## Research

- Providing contemporary data on housing trends and issues in Warrnambool and across the nation
- Keep pace with potential new opportunities and initiatives

## Urban planning

- Efficient and timely planning decisions
- Ensuring adequate land supply
- Planning controls
- Promoting diversity of housing type, block sizes and quality residential environments in all developments.

## Community development

- Work with the community to develop innovative housing solutions

## Service provision

- Currently as a provider of social housing
- Providing community services to people experiencing housing stress

## Regulation

- Statutory planning and public health regulation – rooming houses

## 4. GOVERNANCE

### 4.1 Owner

The Director, Community Development is responsible for monitoring the currency and viability of this policy and updating it when required.

### 4.2 Review

The Director, Community Development will review the policy for any necessary amendments no later than three years after its formulation or after the last review.

### 4.3 Charter of Human Rights Compliance

It is considered that this policy does not impact negatively on any rights identified in the Charter of Human Rights Act (2007).