

Regional Local Government **HOMELESSNESS AND SOCIAL HOUSING CHARTER**



Principles

- **Shared responsibility, accountability and success**
 - » We will partner, leverage our strengths and be accountable to the commitments of this Charter.
- **Housing as core infrastructure**
 - » We recognise that housing solves homelessness
 - » We consider social housing as core infrastructure that can strengthen communities
 - » We understand the ability of local government to influence infrastructure outcomes.
- **Human rights and 'Housing First'**
 - » We recognise that housing is a human right for every person
 - » We recognise the ability of local government to influence an increase in social housing in our region
 - » We will work with the homelessness sector to deliver a housing first response to homelessness.
- **Urgency, innovation and collaboration**
 - » We recognise and commit to act on the urgency of the situation which has been compounded by COVID-19
 - » We reflect this urgency in a well-considered, innovative and timely collective action to deliver outcomes for our region.

Purpose

Address the urgent need for increased social housing and a more effective, integrated and supported homelessness service system.

Regional Commitments

Councils will cooperate regionally and take local actions that align with the intent and the principles of this Charter.

The 13 Councils commit to:

1. Working in partnership with federal and state government, public and private sector partners to coordinate our approach and deliver meaningful outcomes to increase the provision of social housing and respond to homelessness in south and east Melbourne
2. Scoping land within each LGA that has the potential to be re-purposed for adaptable housing needs, and to share these insights on a regional scale with the intention of identifying suitable sites for the development of social housing
3. Advocating together for inclusive housing growth including mandatory inclusionary zoning.

Context

Victoria has a homelessness and housing affordability crisis, made more acute by COVID-19 and the 2019/20 bushfires. A collaborative effort across all tiers of government and partners is required: one that embeds a 'Housing First'* approach aligned to the fundamental principle that housing solves homelessness.

The Council to Homeless Persons (CHP) recommends that the **most powerful action local governments can take** to reduce homelessness is to support the delivery of homes that people can afford. For the lowest income households most vulnerable to homelessness, this means the provision of social housing.^{1**}

The housing 'bottleneck' keeps individuals and

families trapped in homelessness and suffering negative health outcomes and trauma.

To leverage the collective strengths of regional partnerships, the City of Monash brought together 13 councils in Melbourne's east and south east to set a regional agenda. The 13 councils represent more than 2 million residents and are united in striving for an improved homelessness policy-setting and service sector.

These **councils seek systemic change** to increase the supply of permanent, safe, appropriate and timely housing for the most vulnerable members of our community and to embed 'Housing First' as a key foundational principle, fundamental for health, recovery and safety.

In Victoria 44,152 households are waiting for social housing.² In south east and east Melbourne, the situation is dire as **32%** of Victorians experiencing homelessness and **40%** of people on the social housing waiting list live in this region.³



* The Housing First model is a strategic response to homelessness that prioritises permanent and stable housing for people experiencing homelessness (Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute, 2018)

** Social housing refers to housing owned either by state government or by not-for-profit community housing providers that is rented to low income households at either 25% (public housing) or 30% (community housing) of household income. Social housing does not generally include crisis or rooming houses.

REFERENCE LIST

¹ Council to Homeless Persons 2019, 'Making a Difference - Effective Local Government Responses to Homelessness', commissioned by Monash Council October 2019, p.7

² ibid, p.6

³ ibid, p.5