

2.1 MONASH SOCIAL HOUSING FRAMEWORK 2020 – 2025 [DRAFT]

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins, Community Services

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to introduce Council's new *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

The draft framework guides Council's efforts to address homelessness and to influence an increase to the supply of social housing, primarily through outreach and advocacy.

Throughout this framework, Monash endorses the evidence that the most significant action local governments can undertake 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 supporting the provision of social housing.

The *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft) will align to Council's next legislated municipal public health and wellbeing plan 2021 – 2025, where dedicated social housing and related homelessness actions will be embedded, implemented and evaluated.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Council endorse the draft *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* for the purposes of public consultation.

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RECOMMENDATION

That Council endorses the draft Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025 for the purposes of public consultation.

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this paper is to introduce Council's new *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft) [**Attachment 1**]

This is the first social housing framework for Monash. It is also one of Council's first frameworks that has applied the Victorian Gender Equality Bill's gender impact analysis tool through its development and consultation process.

The *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft) is part of a suite of three key documents which detail Council's commitment to addressing homelessness, the housing affordability crisis and advocacy for social housing as a solution to ending homelessness. The framework sits alongside the *Regional Local Government Charter Homelessness & Social Housing* and the *Draft Monash Affordable Housing Strategy*.

It is intended that this draft framework will be released for public comment following the July Council meeting with the finalised framework submitted to Council at a later date.

BACKGROUND

Victoria has a homelessness and housing affordability crisis, made more acute by COVID-19 and the 2019/20 bushfires.

At the time of the 2016 census, Monash had 755 people recorded as homeless. This was the highest number of people recorded in the Eastern metropolitan region. 32% of Victorians without a home, live in Eastern and Southern Melbourne.²

PURPOSE/DISCUSSION

The draft framework guides Council's efforts to address homelessness and to influence an increase to the supply of social housing, primarily through outreach and advocacy.

Throughout this framework, Monash endorses the evidence that the most powerful action local governments can undertake 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 supporting the provision of social housing.

Definition of Social Housing

Social housing refers to housing owned either by the State government or by non-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.

COVID-19

Social housing provision will become more important in the coming months and years, in the wake of COVID-19 with the anticipated economic impact and effect on unemployment rates. There has already been anecdotal reports of an increase in demand for social housing. State Government has announced some funding for some new social housing (not in the City of Monash) and the maintenance of existing properties, however the announcements to date will only make a small impact on the current social housing waiting list in Victoria. Some temporary housing options during COVID-19 have also emerged.

The *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft) will align to Council's next legislated municipal public health and wellbeing plan 2021 – 2025, where dedicated social housing and related homelessness actions will be embedded, implemented and evaluated.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* (draft) is part of a suite of three key documents which detail Council's commitment to addressing homelessness, housing inaffordability and advocacy for social housing. The framework sits alongside the *Regional Local Government Charter Homelessness & Social Housing* and the *Draft Monash Affordable Housing Strategy*.

The framework's priorities will be implemented, measured and evaluated as actions executed through the next municipal public health and wellbeing plan 2021 – 2025.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The purpose of this framework is to guide Council's approach to addressing the significant shortfall of social housing in the community and contribute to improving the health, wellbeing and safety of people experiencing homelessness in Monash.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

Housing is a basic human right. The lack of access to appropriate housing may impinge on many human rights that are protected under several international treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. These rights include the right to: an adequate standard of living; privacy; social security; education; freedom from discrimination; to vote; liberty and security.

The following principles provide a strong human rights framework to guide Council to implement this framework.

Equity: We provide or enable services and supports to everyone, but especially for those who are most vulnerable.

Access & Inclusion: We will remove or reduce barriers to participation by ensuring that information, services and facilities are accessible to people of all abilities and circumstances.

Intersectionality: We recognise that people's lives are multi-dimensional and complex and therefore our response to community issues cannot be developed through a singular lens.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The draft framework will be released for public comment to the community within existing Council resources.

CONSULTATION

In the development of this framework, Council undertook consultation both in-person and online due to COVID-19 adjustments.

Consultation took place with stakeholders including members of Council's Advisory Committees and Reference Groups, stakeholder organisations, including community, housing and emergency relief agencies, and people who have current or prior lived experience of homelessness. For a summary of this consultation, please refer to **ATTACHMENT TWO**.

With the recent introduction of the Victorian Gender Equality Bill, Council applied the gender impact analysis tool to the consultation process, to ensure an intersectional approach to the development of the Framework.

The Monash community will have opportunity to provide feedback to the draft framework subsequent to its endorsement for public comment by Council.

CONCLUSION

Housing is a basic human right. Across Victoria there is a presently significant undersupply of affordable rental accommodation, including in the City of Monash, resulting in long waiting lists for social housing. The solution to reduce homelessness is to support and facilitate an increase in the supply of social housing.

It is requested that Council endorse this draft framework.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 – Draft Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025