

# Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy 2025-2035



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## City of Port Phillip

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## Wominjeka.

Council respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners and Custodians of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge their legacy and spiritual connection to the land and waterways across the City of Port Phillip and pay our heartfelt respect to their Elders, past, present, and emerging.

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Madden House is opening real pathways to housing security for people sleeping rough.

# Message from the Mayor

On behalf of our Council, I am pleased to present our updated Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy.

For almost 40 years, our City has played a leading role in providing and advocating for safe, secure and affordable housing. This new Strategy provides a roadmap to guide us over the next decade to improve housing affordability and reduce homelessness. The Strategy affirms our commitment to reducing homelessness by making Port Phillip home to sufficient accessible, safe and appropriate housing for those who need it most.

As exemplified by the impressive new Madden House initiative in St Kilda for people sleeping rough, this can also involve providing wrap around supports for people with complex needs to help them stay and thrive in housing. This Strategy also addresses the need for more affordable housing, including advocacy for stronger rental protections, so we can all enjoy living within the City of Port Phillip. While our roadmap will guide us – we cannot undertake this journey alone.

We have set out how our Council can work with partners from governments to community housing providers to help more people access homes and support services. Strategic planning, development incentives and innovative ways of identifying housing opportunities are other ways we can contribute to inclusion and social cohesion across Port Phillip.

We are also continuing to advocate to other levels of government to ensure our planning system supports housing affordability. This includes calling for more housing, stronger protections for renters and early delivery of accessible public transport in Fishermans Bend so it realises its potential to provide more housing close to employment.

I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to the development of this timely Strategy. Many individuals and community organisations have an interest and expertise in housing, and your involvement is what makes this Strategy a reality.

Together we can continue to reduce homelessness and improve housing affordability across the City of Port Phillip.



**Cr Alex Makin**  
Mayor, City of Port Phillip



# Vision

**Over the next decade, the City of Port Phillip will work toward achieving functional zero homelessness—where homelessness is rare, brief, and non-recurring. Where those most in need have access to safe, appropriate housing and the right supports to build stability and independence including wraparound supports such as mental health, alcohol and other drug (AOD) services, financial counselling, legal services, and peer/community-led models.**

We will champion the development of new affordable housing, seek to protect existing affordable housing stock, and advocate for greater security and affordability in the private rental market.

While homelessness and affordable housing is not traditionally a core local government responsibility, we recognise that affordable housing with appropriate supports, has a profound impact on inclusion, social cohesion, public space safety and vibrancy, and individual wellbeing. This is why we will work collaboratively with residents, community organisations, and all levels of government to deliver integrated, place-based responses.

We recognise our support and co-ordination role, which leverages our local intelligence and modest resources, is a small but integral part in supporting the efforts of the state and federal government, the homelessness, housing, and broader community services sectors who have the most levers to address this challenging and interconnected social issue.

This Strategy reflects our commitment to ensuring we play our part in Port Phillip to build a welcoming, equitable city—where everyone has a place to call home and the opportunity to live well.

Progress towards this vision will be monitored through the following key outcome indicator:

- Functional Zero; Working towards functional Zero via the Port Phillip Zero Initiative with three people or less sleeping rough at any one time.

This will be achieved through direct support and service coordination in addition to:

- Planning levers:** where eligible developments successfully deliver affordable housing units.
- Advocacy success:** where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for affordable housing, social housing and homelessness are utilised to the fullest extent possible.
- Improved perceptions of safety and pride in neighbourhoods:** achieving scores of >7.6 in community satisfaction across measures relating to safety, pride, connection and enjoyment of neighbourhoods and agreement that City of Port Phillip is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone.

These indicators relate to things Council influences but does not directly control as Council plays a small part in a broader service system. Progress against these indicators is dependent on a range of factors external to Council, including actions from other levels of government and the social services sector.

## Vision

We will champion the development of new affordable housing, seek to protect existing affordable housing stock, and advocate for greater security and affordability within the private rental market.



The Marlborough Street community housing project delivered 46 affordable housing apartments in the heart of Balaclava.

# Outcome measures

The strategy’s actions align with five over-arching objectives. Each has separate success measures associated with it. An overview is provided below. Detailed actions associated with each objective can be found on **page 24** of this document.

Housing Continuum Aspect	Goal / Objective	Broad action	Measure
<b>Strengthen community responses to homelessness</b>	Reduce homelessness in Port Phillip by coordinating, compassionate, place based responses that support people into safe, stable housing and inclusive community life.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Local Coordination and Leadership:</b> Play a coordinating role in bringing together services, partners, and community efforts to deliver integrated, locally responsive homelessness, mental health, drug and alcohol solutions.</li> <li>• <b>Early Intervention and Prevention:</b> Play a role in supporting homelessness services so that they can provide appropriate supports to prevent homelessness before it occurs, especially for those at risk.</li> <li>• <b>Advocacy and Influence:</b> Advocate for systemic change and increased investment in appropriate supported housing, homelessness services, mental health and drug and alcohol support services at state and federal levels.</li> </ul>	<b>Functional Zero:</b> Working towards Functional Zero via the Port Phillip Zero Initiative with three people or less sleeping rough at any one time
<b>Enable access to social housing</b>	Support the sustainability of social housing in Port Phillip, so that those with the greatest need have access to safe, secure, and supported homes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Protecting Existing Stock:</b> Advocate for the retention and renewal of existing public and community housing assets.</li> <li>• <b>Safe and Supportive Environments:</b> Advocate for social housing dwellings and service models that are safe and include wraparound services when needed to support long-term stability and wellbeing.</li> <li>• <b>Partnerships for Impact:</b> Collaborate with community housing providers, government, and the private sector to facilitate new social housing where there is a level of community support.</li> </ul>	<b>Advocacy success:</b> where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for social housing are utilised to the fullest extent possible.

Housing Continuum Aspect	Goal / Objective	Broad action	Measure
<p><b>Improve access to Affordable and Key Worker Housing</b></p>	<p>Ensure that people who contribute to the vibrancy and functioning of our city—such as teachers, nurses, artists, and hospitality workers—can afford to live locally.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Facilitating New Supply:</b> Identify and activate opportunities for affordable and key worker housing through planning, partnerships, and advocacy where there is a level of community support.</li> <li>• <b>Innovative Delivery Models:</b> Support diverse housing models, including build-to-rent, shared equity, and community-led developments.</li> <li>• <b>Address market pressures:</b> Explore the impact on rental affordability of short stay rental accommodation and whether any changes are required.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocacy success:</b> where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for affordable housing are utilised to the fullest extent possible.</p>
<p><b>Support Stability in the Private Rental Market</b></p>	<p>Promote stability, equity, and wellbeing for renters by supporting initiatives that strengthen rights and access within the private rental market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advocacy for Reform:</b> Champion stronger protections for renters, including longer leases, rent controls, higher levels of commonwealth rental assistance, improved dispute resolution and better data and monitoring.</li> <li>• <b>Information and Support:</b> Provide renters with access to information, advice, and local support services to help navigate the rental system.</li> <li>• <b>Quality Standards:</b> Encourage and support compliance with the 14 categories of minimum rental standards as outlined by Consumer Affairs Victoria to ensure safe and healthy living conditions.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Advocacy success:</b> where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for private renters are utilised to the fullest extent possible.</p>
<p><b>Strengthening Places that Support Housing Stability and Homelessness Solutions</b></p>	<p>Shape inclusive neighbourhoods (including in the growth area of Fishermans Bend) and public spaces that foster housing stability, resilience, and pathways out of homelessness through thoughtful design, collaboration, and planning—ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home in Port Phillip.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Design for Inclusion:</b> Ensure public spaces and housing developments promote dignity, wellbeing, and connection for people experiencing or at risk of homelessness and are welcoming, safe, and well-integrated into the community.</li> <li>• <b>Place-Based Responses:</b> Collaborate locally to deliver tailored housing and homelessness solutions that reflect neighbourhood needs.</li> <li>• <b>Integrated Planning:</b> Align housing with transport, services, and infrastructure to support long-term stability.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Improved perceptions of safety and pride in neighbourhoods:</b> achieving scores of &gt;7.6 in community satisfaction across measures relating to safety, pride, connection and enjoyment of neighbourhoods and agreement that City of Port Phillip is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone.</p>

# Introduction

The City of Port Phillip's Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy guides the ways Council will support people experiencing housing stress and homelessness over the next 10 years.

The Strategy will contribute to achieving Port Phillip's community vision of **a liveable and vibrant city that enhances community connection and wellbeing**, by working towards homelessness being rare, brief, and non-recurring, improving the supply and diversity of affordable housing and the availability of appropriate supports for people to maintain housing.

The development of this Strategy has been informed by in depth background research, other Council strategies, and community members (including community service and housing providers) who shared their challenges and priorities as part of the engagement process including engagement related to both this strategy and the Community Safety Roundtable and deliberative engagement panel associated with the development of the Plan for Port Phillip including budget.

## We will achieve this through five strategic pillars:



### Strengthen community responses to homelessness:

Reduce homelessness in Port Phillip by coordinating, compassionate, place-based responses that support people into safe, stable housing and inclusive community life.



### Enable access to social housing:

Support the sustainability of social housing in Port Phillip, so that those with the greatest need have access to safe, secure, and supported homes.



### Improve access to Affordable and Key Worker Housing:

Ensure that people who contribute to the vibrancy and functioning of our city—such as teachers, nurses, artists, and hospitality workers—can afford to live locally.



### Support Stability in the Private Rental Market:

Promote stability, equity, and wellbeing for renters by supporting initiatives that strengthen rights and access within the private rental market.



### Strengthening Places that Support Housing Stability and Homelessness Solutions:

Shape inclusive neighbourhoods and public spaces that foster housing stability, resilience, and pathways out of homelessness through thoughtful design, collaboration, and planning—ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home in Port Phillip.

## 1. Why do we need a new Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy?

Safe, secure, and accessible housing is a key determinate of health and fosters a socially diverse and inclusive community. Improving housing and food security is one of the City of Port Phillip's five key health priorities, as identified in the Plan for Port Phillip, our overarching Council Plan. A homelessness and affordable housing strategy is the key foundational strategic planning document that will enable Council to achieve this priority.

Council's previous affordable housing strategy, *In Our Backyard - Growing Affordable Housing in Port Phillip 2015-2025 (In Our Backyard)*, was adopted in 2015 and concluded in 2025. It achieved a significant amount, including:

- Development of Wellington St Common Ground project, which will have 26 units of community housing, built by St Kilda Community Housing, with the support of a \$5.12 million cash and land contribution from Council, and was completed in September 2025.
- Delivery of Marlborough St community housing project, which has 46 units of community housing, built by HousingFirst in 2022 with the support of \$5 million cash and land contribution from Council.

Prior to the *In Our Backyard* strategy, the last two projects were delivered by Council:

- Delivery of Woodstock, Balaclava, which has 31 units of community housing, built by Council in the air space over a replacement community car park in 2006 (\$5 million land contribution from Council).
- Delivery of Kyme Place, Port Melbourne, which has 27 units of community housing, built by Council and HousingFirst in the air space over a replacement community car park in 2012 (\$2.25 million in cash and land).

Additionally, Council's homelessness strategy – *Think and Act - Homelessness Action Strategy 2015-2020* – has made a significant contribution in Council's response to homelessness with achievements including:

- Supporting people with lived experience of homelessness to participate in activities which raise awareness of the challenges faced by people at risk of homelessness.
- Delivering a sponsorship program for older residents to access public housing through housing information, direct assistance and supports for outreach case work.

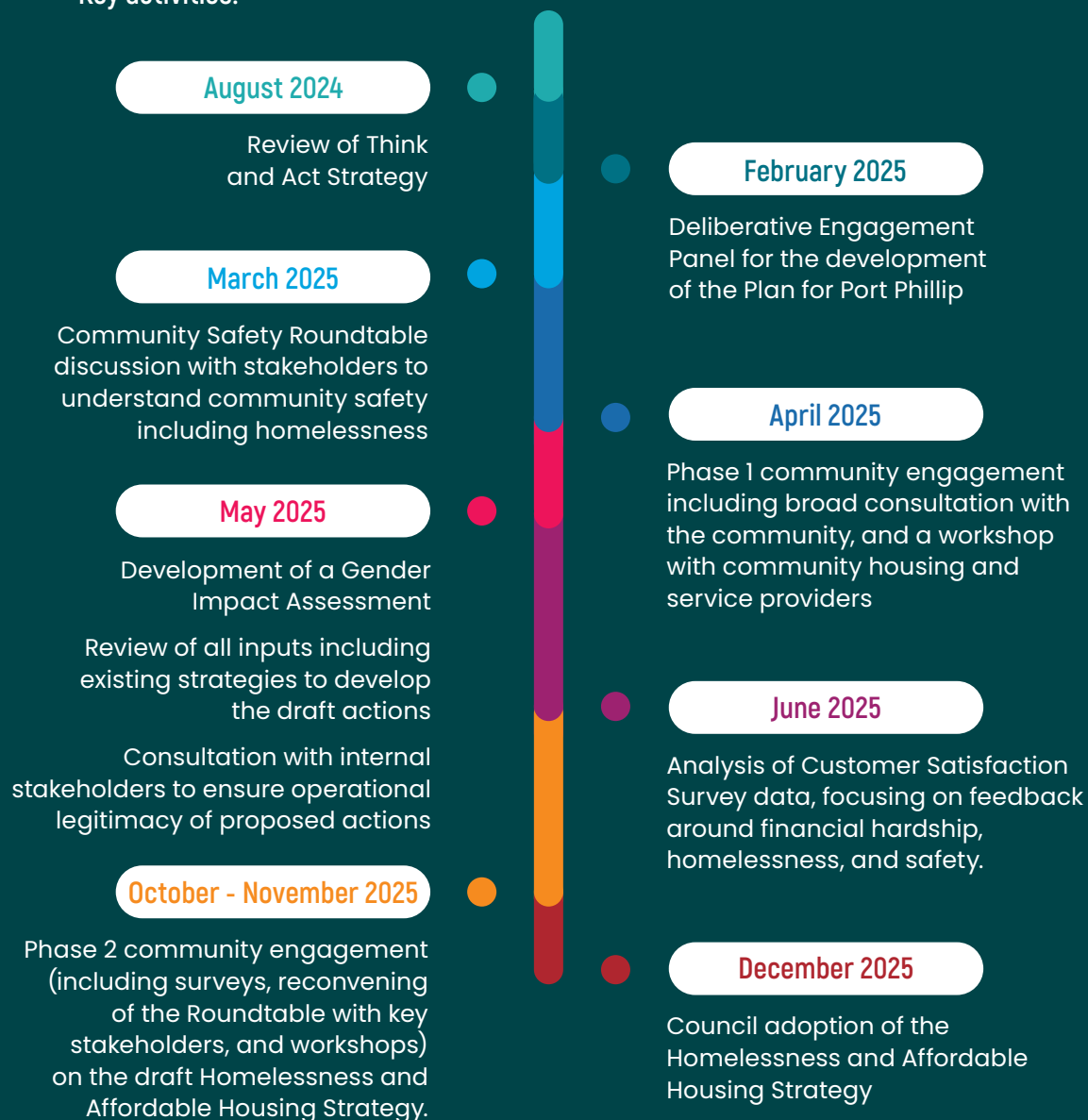
- Facilitating 'Port Phillip Zero' as a leading participating agency network to coordinate management of housing and support for persons experiencing homelessness.
- Enacting a funding deed between Council and Launch Housing to engage a full-time Launch staff member, dedicated to providing outreach support for people sleeping rough in the City.

In the ten years since these strategies were developed, a lot has changed. The City is facing several new challenges and opportunities, including changes in the landscape of community service providers, and in State and Federal Government policies. The needs and expectations of our community are also continuously evolving.

## 2. How this strategy was developed

This strategy has been developed through a rigorous process, including consultation with the Port Phillip community and our network of local community housing agencies and community service providers, a review of the State and Federal legislative and policy landscape, and a review of Council's previous homelessness and affordable housing strategies, which this combined strategy replaces.

### Key activities:



## 2.1 Consideration of other strategies and plans

The following strategies and plans will interact with the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy:

<b>Reconciliation Action Plan 2025-27</b>	<p>The Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) represents Council’s continued commitment to support meaningful and mutually beneficial relationships with First Peoples in Port Phillip. The RAP sets out the steps we will take to advance those things we do well and, improve how we support Port Phillip First Peoples community.</p>	<p>The RAP outlines a number of relevant actions relating to gathering places and supporting First Nations people. These are mirrored in the H&amp;AH strategy. Additionally, the strategy incorporates actions related to housing and providing support to all people.</p>
<b>Accessibility Action Plan 2023-2025</b>	<p>A legislative requirement for all Councils, the Accessibility Action Plan outlines the steps Council will take in reducing discrimination towards people with disability. It publicly commits to change with Council playing a role as a service provider, ally, consumer, advocate and employer.</p>	<p>This H&amp;AH Strategy incorporates an action considering housing needs of all people including people with disabilities.</p>
<b>Community Safety Plan 2025-2029</b>	<p>The Community Safety Plan outlines Council’s commitment to working in partnership with the community and key stakeholders to provide a safer and more vibrant community for all. It details the City of Port Phillip’s actions to making our community a safer and more resilient place to live, work and visit. It also aligns with a range of state and federal strategies that relate to crime prevention, family violence, reducing harm from alcohol and drugs, emergency response and community safety.</p>	<p>Council’s Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy directly complements the Community Safety Plan. Both documents have been strongly informed by the Community Safety Roundtable and community feedback which supported the holistic approach led across these key programs. Rather than repeat actions across these documents, Roundtable recommendations were considered for each document, with those relating specifically to homelessness, affordable housing and programs as transition to housing supports, service gaps, opportunities and alternate models, hubs, and gathering places, allocated to this Strategy.</p>
<b>Plan for Port Phillip (PfPP) 2025-2035</b>	<p>Outlines the community vision for Port Phillip: Proudly Port Phillip: A liveable and vibrant city that enhances community connection and wellbeing.</p>	<p>The PfPP outlines improving housing and food security as a health priority area to be addressed through greater availability of social and affordable housing options for community members on lower incomes, and more accessible pathways into secure, safe, and stable housing for community members experiencing homelessness.</p>

<b>Climate Emergency Plan 2023–2028</b>	Port Phillip Council declared a Climate Emergency in 2019, recognising that climate change is a global issue and that everyone must play their part. The declaration responds to the critical climate situation and demonstrates Council's commitment to act.	The Climate Emergency Plan influences actions within the H&AH strategy regarding supporting our vulnerable communities when faced with climate challenges such as heat waves.
<b>Move, Connect, Live Integrated Transport Strategy 2018–2028</b>	Aims to create neighbourhoods with access to key services within a 10-minute walk. It seeks Victorian Government funding for early delivery of connections to public transport, public space and streetscapes, footpaths, and bike lanes in Fishermans Bend; and to optimise wider transport connections for both current and future residents and workers.	The H&AH strategy recognises the importance of appropriate infrastructure to support affordable, social and community housing sites and includes actions to reflect the necessity for transport to connect people to housing and to services.
<b>Places for People Public Space Strategy 2022–2032</b>	Sets the vision and blueprint for the future of our public spaces in Port Phillip.	The H&AH strategy acknowledged the need for public spaces to be safe and accessible and reflects actions within the strategy.
<b>Housing Strategy 2024–2039</b>	The Housing Strategy outlines a vision for the nature, density and location of housing in Port Phillip, and explores planning tools to help achieve social and affordable housing through the planing permit process.	The Housing Strategy outlines a number of actions of direct relevance to affordable housing which have been reflected in the actions.
<b>Positive Ageing Policy 2023–26</b>	The Positive Ageing Policy seeks to ensure that Port Phillip is an age-friendly city across three areas, one of which includes: A city where all older people have opportunities to take part in community and civic life and can access the services, programs and housing that meet their changing needs as they age.	The H&AH Strategy incorporates an action considering housing needs of all people including people as they age.

Additionally, the Community Safety Roundtable (CSR) Report undertaken in March 2025, and the Deliberative Engagement Panel (DEP) undertaken in February 2025, outlined a number of recommendations for homelessness support in the City of Port Phillip.

The Customer Satisfaction Survey (June 2025) results highlighted a number of aspects of housing related financial stress, homelessness and safety. Specifically, the survey highlighted that perception of safety in public areas for City of Port Phillip was lower than the metropolitan average (6.5 / 10 compared to average 7.9 / 10) and the satisfaction with aspects of planning and housing development was slightly lower as well (7.2 / 10 compared to the average 7.3 / 10). The information provided through the survey has been taken into consideration in developing this strategy.

A gender impact assessment has also been undertaken to ensure a gender and intersectional lens has been applied to the actions.



**Park Towers has been part of Melbourne's housing story for decades.**

# Context

In developing this Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy, we considered the diversity, creativity, and resilience of the Port Phillip community.

## Who are we?

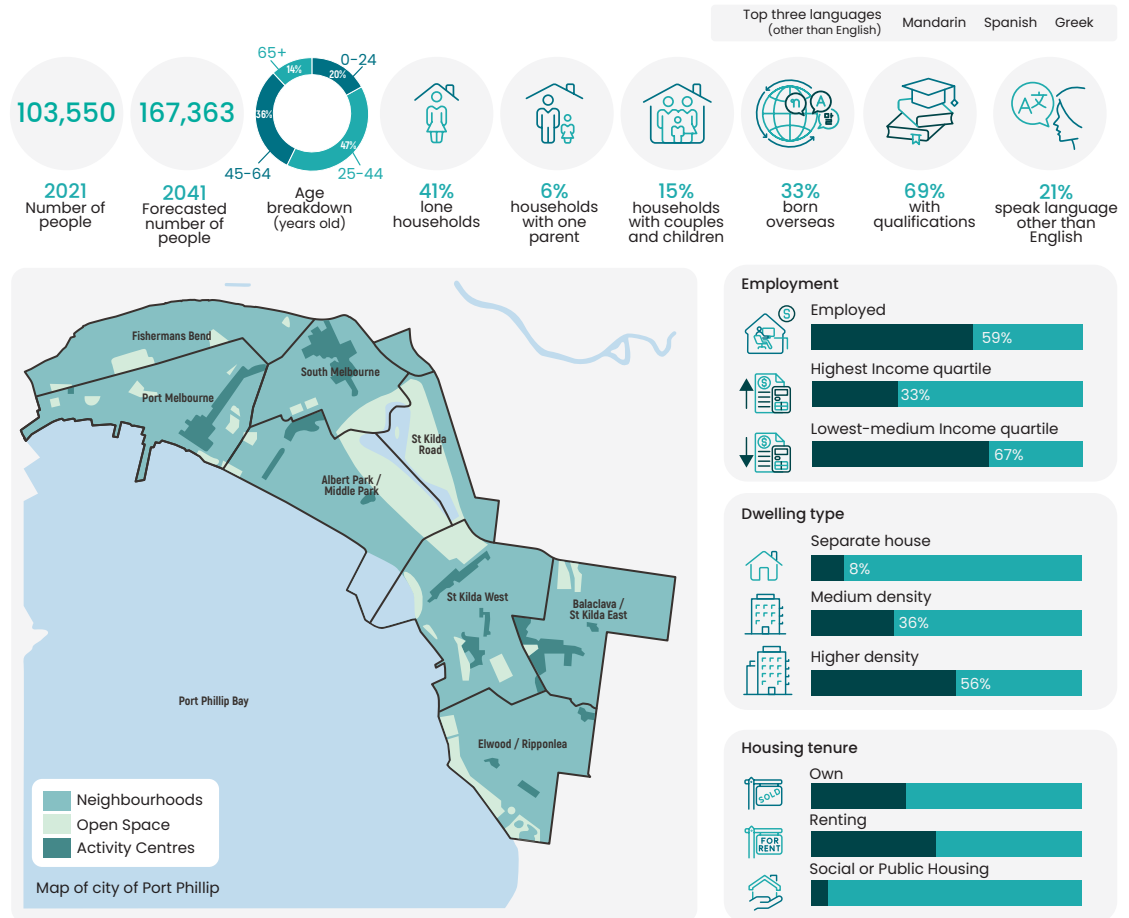


Figure 1: City of Port Phillip's current community demographics

Source: Community Profile ID Consulting / 2021 Census

## Port Phillip has a proud history of inclusion, and everyone is welcome here.

First Peoples have and continue to care for Country in our council area for generations. We have 514 people in Port Phillip who identify as First People.

Our cultural diversity is increasing. Our residents come from over 160 different countries and speak more than 120 different languages and dialects at home. One in three of our residents were born overseas and over half (56 per cent) have at least one parent born overseas. One in five speak a language other than English at home and five per cent have difficulty speaking English.

Residents are more likely than greater Melbourne residents to be in the highest income group, educated (a high proportion are university educated) and employed (71 per cent labour force participation rate compared to 64 per cent in greater Melbourne).

However, we also have pockets of significant disadvantage and vulnerability in our community. Our people are faring worse compared to the broader Victorian population in social capital measures relating to affordability and food security. Food service providers report a strain on their offering with an increased number of people seeking food support and decreasing donations and volunteers.

Our population is ageing. The largest proportion of our residents are between 25 and 44 years old (41 per cent) although this is offset by a slightly lower birthrate and a growing proportion of people aged 55 and over. There are more than 19,000 people aged 60 years and older living in Port Phillip, representing 19 per cent of the population. Older people are more likely to volunteer and participate actively in the community, however, they may also require greater support.

Over one in five people in Australia identify as a person with disability and the number of people with disability in Australia is increasing.

## Housing in the City of Port Phillip

Australia is currently experiencing a housing and cost of living crisis, which has a significant impact on the entire community and specifically on low and very low-income earners. On any given night, approximately 25 people are estimated to be sleeping rough on the streets, in parks, or on the foreshore in Port Phillip, although this number ranges according to housing availability and in July 2025 was much higher at 45 people. Many more are reported to be sleeping in rooming houses or overcrowded dwellings.

The most recent census data shows that 44 per cent of households in Port Phillip are purchasing or fully own their home, 44 per cent are renting privately, and 6.3 per cent live in social housing (Homes Victoria, 2025). Compared to the metropolitan Melbourne average, fewer households in Port Phillip own or are purchasing their dwelling and more are renters.

Rental affordability is decreasing. In the year to June 2022, 1 per cent of new lettings in Port Phillip were affordable to low-income households. This has decreased to 0.6 per cent of new lettings in the year to June 2024. For the March 2024 quarter, rental affordability for one-bedroom accommodation in the City of Port Phillip was 0.3 per cent compared to the greater Metropolitan rate of 0.8 per cent.

The latest Customer Satisfaction Survey results (June 2025) highlighted that 44 per cent of mortgage owners and 37 per cent of renters reported moderate to high level of housing related financial stress. The results were somewhat higher in areas such as St Kilda East, Balaclava and South Melbourne, compared to rest of the municipality.

Social housing stock as a proportion of total housing stock has shown a gradual decline over time, from 7.2 per cent in 2014/15 to 6.4 per cent in 2022/23. As at 30 June 2024 there are 4,238 social housing dwellings in the City of Port Phillip.

Several sites in our City have been identified for redevelopment by the State Government, to increase social and public housing. Homes Victoria, which sits within the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH) delivers the Big Housing Build – Social Housing Growth Fund programs and grows and manages existing social and public housing. The Emerald Hill Estate in South Melbourne and Barak Beacon Estate in Port Melbourne are currently being redeveloped by Homes Victoria. Additionally, Park Towers, Layfield Court, Inkerman Heights and 200 Dorcas Street South Melbourne have all been identified by Homes Victoria for redevelopment in the coming years. The people who currently live in these housing estates will have to move out while they are rebuilt, which will put pressure on available social and public housing stock and the ability for DFFH to reduce their current waiting list for social and public housing. Council can advocate to influence the specifics around these redevelopments and also support for tenants during what is potentially a stressful relocation while the build is in progress.

A number of community safety issues have been reported in the City of Port Phillip, particularly in St Kilda high street hotspot areas such as Fitzroy Street and Jackson Street, Woodstock Street and Dianella Lane, and Acland Street. These issues include incidents of crime and some residents reporting that they feel unsafe in their homes and when moving around their neighbourhood in parts of the municipality. Some residents feel no effective action seems to be undertaken by Council, Police, State Government, and service providers to address rough sleeping, poor mental health, criminal behaviour and offending, and public drug and alcohol use.

While homelessness does not necessarily result in community safety issues, these and other social issues can become intertwined.

The growth area of Fishermans Bend continues to present opportunity to expand the stock of affordable and community housing. Advocacy and partnerships with State Government and benevolent partners can support us to maximise this opportunity. Forecasted population growth in Port Phillip is expected to have implications for social disadvantage, rough sleeping, and crime.

## Services in the City of Port Phillip

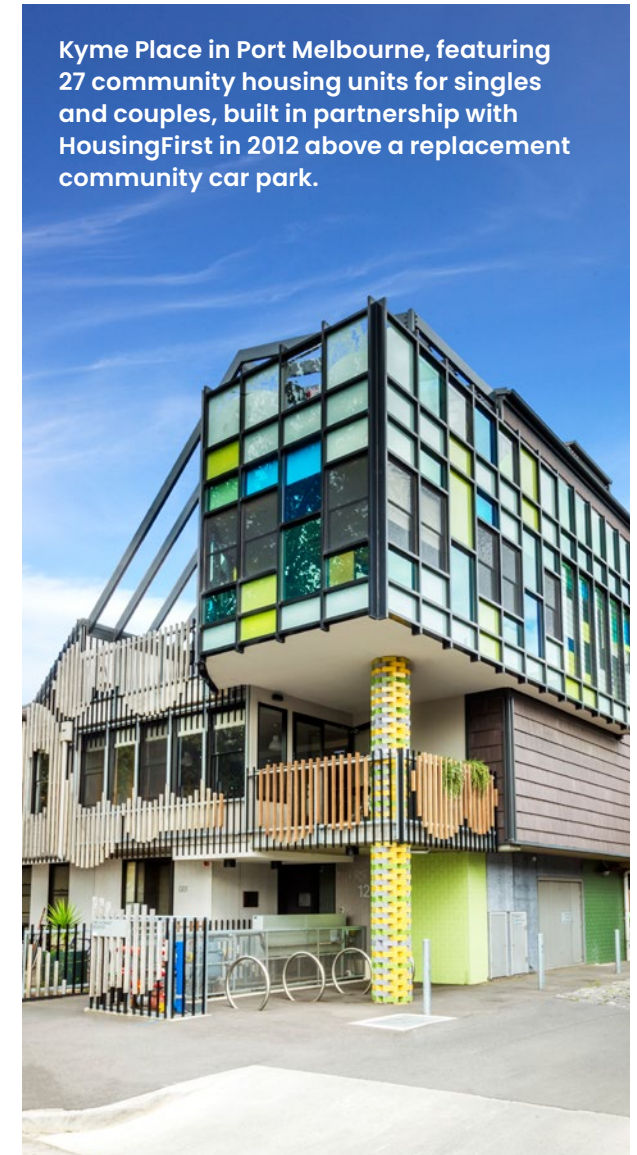
The causes of homelessness are numerous and varied, including a critical shortage of affordable housing, family violence, unemployment, mental illness, family breakdown, and drug/alcohol abuse. The community of Port Phillip has access to a range of services and facilities to support their health and wellbeing. Council and community service providers must continually adapt to meet changing and increasing needs as a result of population growth, economic conditions and changing community demographics and expectations.

Community housing agencies operating in Port Phillip include Common Equity Housing Ltd, Community Housing (Vic), Housing Choices Australia, HousingFirst, Launch Housing Limited, South Port Community Housing Group Inc, St Kilda Community Housing and Uniting Housing (Victoria).

Additionally, several services which support those experiencing or at risk of homelessness operate in the City of Port Phillip. These include: Ngwala Willumbong, Launch Housing, Southport Community Legal, Southside Justice, Better Health Network, Sacred Heart Mission, Salvation Army, First Step, Wintringham, Port Phillip Community Group, Alfred Health, and Justice Connect.

Council partners with local organisations and the community through the project Port Phillip Zero. Port Phillip Zero aims to end rough sleeping homelessness in the City of Port Phillip by providing appropriate, secure, affordable long-term housing, and support, to all people who are living without a home. Specifically, the Port Phillip Zero model uses a 'housing first' approach that places people experiencing homelessness directly into permanent and safe housing with 'wrap around' support services to address complex needs such as mental health and alcohol and drug support. The goal of Port Phillip Zero is to achieve Functional Zero homelessness for people sleeping rough in the City of Port Phillip which will be achieved when the number of people entering and experiencing rough sleeping homelessness within a month is less than the average six-monthly placement rate into long-term housing. The City of Port Phillip coordinates services for these individuals by keeping an up-to-date list of everyone they know to be sleeping rough, in their cars or in abandoned buildings.

City of Port Phillip is considered by some to be a national leader in local government in the provision of social and affordable housing over a nearly 40-year period. Over that time City of Port Phillip pioneered air space development over replacement car parks, established the Port Phillip Housing Trust, and has delivered over 1,190 housing units through initiatives across the municipality.



**Kyme Place in Port Melbourne, featuring 27 community housing units for singles and couples, built in partnership with HousingFirst in 2012 above a replacement community car park.**

# Our role

Each level of government has a role to play in relation to homelessness and affordable housing.

## The housing continuum

The housing continuum outlines different types of housing and the income groups they typically serve. This continuum runs from persons experiencing homelessness, through crisis accommodation, social (public and community) housing, affordable rental housing, and private rental housing, to home ownership.

The housing continuum is not linear; people can and do move backwards and forwards within it and skip multiple tenure or housing types. Some will never experience either end of the continuum.

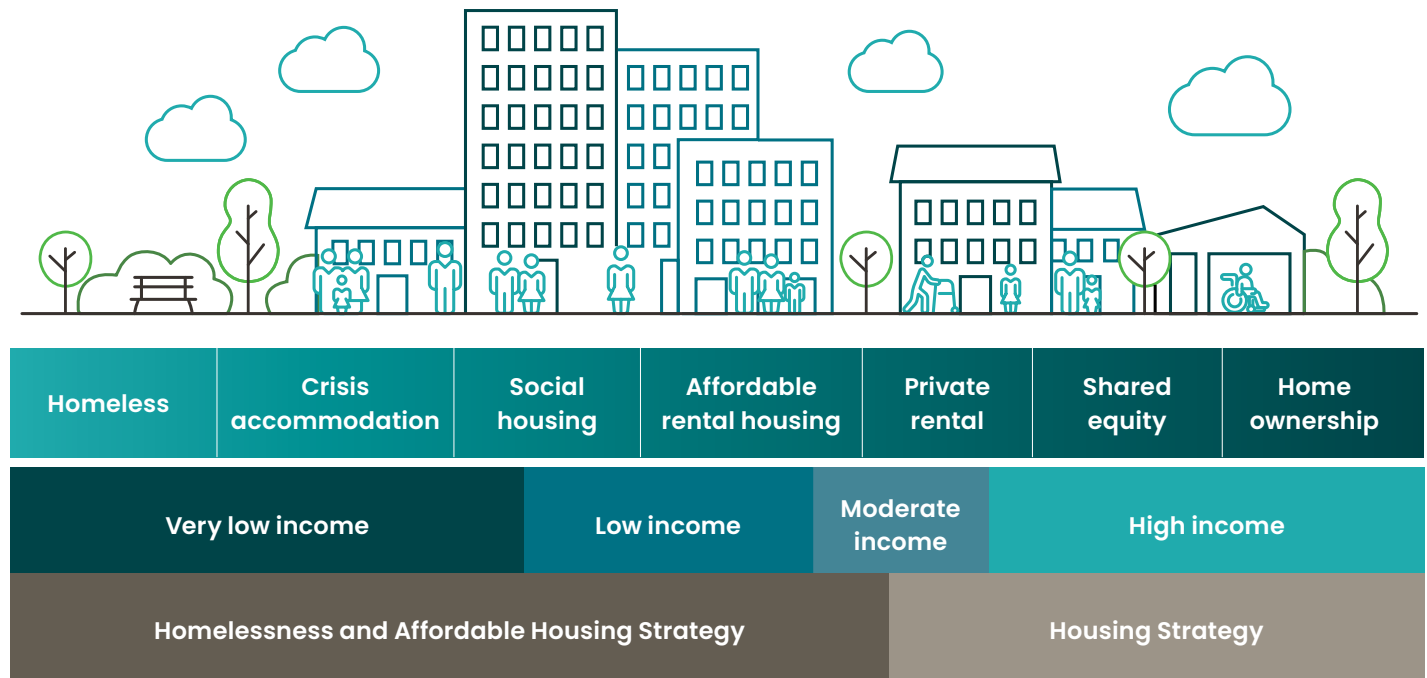


Figure 2: the housing continuum, showing the types of housing, the income cohorts these housing types target, and the approximate housing types and income cohorts that are addressed by the Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy



Aerial view of Elwood Park and Foreshore, including Wattie Watson Oval.

## AFFORDABLE HOUSING

is defined in the Planning and Environment Act 1987 as 'housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the needs of very-low, low, and moderate-income households.' Social housing has a larger public subsidy than other types of affordable housing (e.g. private affordable housing), with rents set at no more than 30 per cent of a household's income.

## SOCIAL HOUSING

'Social housing' is comprised of public housing, which is owned and managed by the State housing authority; and community housing, which is owned by the State housing authority and managed by community housing organisations, or owned and managed by community housing organisations. Typically, social housing tenants have higher financial and support needs.

## PRIVATE AFFORDABLE HOUSING

'Private affordable housing' has below market rent, often set as a percentage of market rent, but not as low as social housing, and is targeted at low to moderate-income households, including key workers. It can be provided by benevolent private developers or developers accessing government grant or loan funding. Rents for this type of housing are usually set as a percentage of market rent e.g., 75 per cent of market rent or a percentage of income.

## Roles of different levels of government

Most of the housing in Port Phillip is privately-owned properties, which is influenced by various geographic, regulatory, and economic factors. Local government does not control most of the drivers behind the private market. However, Council does play a role in facilitating an efficient housing market.

Local government is the only tier of government that:

- Undertakes a comprehensive review of local housing needs and demand.
- Reviews land capacity and land use trends, aiming for land supply to meet community needs.
- Provides detailed guidance on how local housing needs and demands should be met regarding housing type, size, amenity, character, and location.
- Leads the implementation of local housing strategies, including changes to local planning policy, zones, and planning controls in the planning scheme to achieve desired housing outcomes.
- Approves the vast majority of planning applications.

Table 2 outlines the responsibilities of different levels of government in improving the supply of affordable housing and in responding to those experiencing homelessness.




	Federal	State	Local
			
<b>Affordable housing: roles in increasing the stock of affordable housing</b>	Immigration Taxation Grants Social housing investment Major infrastructure funding Commonwealth Rent Assistance	Public and community housing Major infrastructure provision Land release Planning policy framework Suite of planning controls Stamp duty and land tax	Local strategic land use and development planning Planning and building approvals Local infrastructure Rates Advocacy to other levels of government Encourage or directly support delivery of social housing.
<b>Homelessness response: roles in supporting those experiencing homelessness</b>	Welfare support and rental assistance Funds programs	Social housing allocation and maintenance Funds programs Health system	Referral, support, and direct outreach Service coordination Information provision Funds community providers through grants and service agreements Advocacy to other levels of government

Table 2 Government planning responsibilities

Local government is legislatively responsible for land use planning and developing a health and wellbeing plan. Investment beyond this is typically a discretionary service that individual councils choose to make to respond to local community need in line with the Local Government Act<sup>1</sup>.

## Roles played by other organisations

**Alongside each level of government, the community housing sector is vital to providing affordable housing.**

### Registered Housing Organisations

Registered Housing Organisations are not-for-profit community housing agencies that build and/or operate social and affordable housing. They are regulated by the Victorian Housing Registrar and are required to meet legislated performance standards. Funding for Registered Housing Organisations comes from the government, philanthropic donations, and rental income from their tenants. They can also take loans to finance housing. They comprise registered Housing Associations, and registered Housing Providers. In Port Phillip the main agencies are HousingFirst, Southport Community Housing Group, and St Kilda Community Housing.

### Support Organisations

These are typically not-for-profit organisations that provide support services for people who are homeless or support to obtain and maintain a tenancy. Support can include financial counselling, alcohol and other drug support, mental health services, domestic violence services, legal services, or more general health and medical services. Examples in Port Phillip include Ngwala Willumbong, Alfred Health, Launch Housing, Sacred Heart Mission, Salvation Army, and Better Health Network.

<sup>1</sup> Each Council takes an individual approach to their role and contributions toward Social and Affordable Housing. The MAVs Victorian Local Government Social and Affordable Housing Survey (2023) reported approximately 90 per cent of the Councils surveyed hold a policy position regarding social and affordable housing (forty-one councils surveyed, 52 per cent of all Vic councils). Of these, two thirds (27 Councils) reported involvement in social and affordable housing development outside the Big Housing Build as developers (4), partners (11) or land contributors (12).

Only 7 per cent of Councils surveyed (3 councils) did not have a social and affordable housing policy position and did not intend to develop one in the immediate future. The majority utilise advocacy opportunities through the planning system and / or in support of social housing providers.

# Objectives and Actions

## Objective 1: Strengthen community responses to homelessness

Reduce homelessness in Port Phillip by coordinating compassionate, place-based responses that support people into safe, stable housing and inclusive community life.

The 'alignment' column in Table 3 shows how these actions align with other Council strategies and plans.

Table 3: Actions to support Objective 1:

Local coordination and leadership		Alignment
1.1	<b>Review and improve Council's homelessness service model</b> so it can better co-ordinate across services to deliver a more integrated, empathetic, and effective assertive outreach response <sup>2</sup> .	Community Safety Roundtable
1.2	<b>Make the Port Phillip Zero partnership stronger</b> by improving how we manage cases, share and use data, act on improvement opportunities and bring in other services to better respond to complex client needs to achieve pathways out of homelessness for those sleeping rough.	Community Safety Roundtable #17 Think and Act Review Plan for Port Phillip
1.3	<b>Coordinate housing, health (including mental health support and access to drug and alcohol support) food, and homelessness support</b> (including social inclusion and legal/financial assistance) for those experiencing chronic homelessness and ensure an integrated, culturally safe and trauma-informed response in public spaces via the Protocol for Assisting People who are Sleeping Rough <sup>3</sup> .	Accessibility Action Plan, Positive Aging Policy and Think and Act Review and Community Safety Roundtable #5 <sup>4</sup>

2 Establishing a dedicated CoPP internal outreach coordinator to ensure effective and assertive 24/7 outreach and response (CSRT#18).

3 Partner with community agencies to help prevent homelessness or reduce time spent without a secure home, for older people facing housing stress or loss. (CoPP Positive Ageing Policy)

4 Work closely with local services to update CoPP's Protocol for Assisting People Sleeping Rough to ensure it reflects a culturally safe, trauma-informed, human rights based non-enforcement approach. This should be developed in tandem with the formal Police/CoPP Protocol referred to above.

Local coordination and leadership		Alignment
1.4	<b>Review and implement the Sudden Rooming House Closure Protocol</b> to ensure a rapid and effective Council response in collaboration with Victorian Government when needed.	Think and Act Review
1.5	<b>Maintain and enhance existing partnership protocols</b> among City of Port Phillip, Victoria Police, and key service providers (e.g., Launch, Access Health, Ngwala Willumbong).	Community Safety Roundtable #12
Early intervention and prevention		Alignment
1.6	<b>Identify potential service gaps, review and strengthen funding agreements</b> with service providers who work with people in Port Phillip who have complex needs and face multiple barriers to securing and maintaining housing <sup>5</sup> .	Community Safety Roundtable and Deliberative Engagement Panel Plan for Port Phillip and Community Safety Roundtable #15
1.7	<b>Provide targeted assistance during emergencies</b> to address the immediate needs of people experiencing homelessness <sup>6</sup> .	Climate Emergency Plan, Think and Act review
1.8	<b>Explore opportunities for programs</b> which will contribute to reducing community conflict (such as the Peacemaking Programs) <sup>7</sup> .	Community Safety Roundtable #31
1.9	<b>Use arts, libraries and events to foster inclusion</b> and a sense of belonging, as one way to support people from challenges like homelessness, mental health issues and substance use.	Benchmarked strategies

5 Renew and clearly define service agreements between CoPP and community service agencies, outlining explicit mandates, outreach obligations, required capacities, and accountability mechanisms (CSRT#16).

Extend and formalise the partnership with Ngwala Willumbong, giving due consideration to the need for increased funding, and capacity building (CSRT#19).

Continue to support and adequately fund service providers demonstrating effectiveness, particularly those working with high-impact cohorts (individuals leaving prison, mental health, or rehabilitation facilities) (CSRT#13).

Ensure adequate provision of supports to assist individuals in maintaining long-term housing placements (CSRT#10).

Increase funding for support services (e.g. drug and alcohol, homelessness, domestic violence) (DEP P1/R1)

6 Maintain strong partnerships as listed in the strategy (e.g. Launch Housing Services, inner South Community Health Community Connection Program) to enable targeted response during emergencies' (Staying connected, PDF p.6)

7 That Council consider introducing a Peacemaking Program similar to the Neighbourhood Justice Centre Model operating in the City of Yarra to reduce community conflict. (CSRT#31)

Advocacy and influence	Alignment
<b>1.10</b> <b>Develop a community education and awareness anti-stigma campaign</b> targeting perceptions of people experiencing mental health, substance abuse, and homelessness issues, aiming to reduce fear, encourage understanding, and ultimately enhance community safety perceptions.	Community Safety Roundtable #28 Benchmarked strategies
<b>1.11</b> <b>Support an annual Homeless Memorial</b> and Homeless Prevention Week initiative.	Think and Act Review
<b>1.12</b> <b>Audit existing drop-in and support services within City of Port Phillip</b> to identify service gaps and opportunities for advocacy, co-location or integration ('wraparound support').	Community Safety Roundtable #23
<b>1.13</b> <b>Advocate for better coordination between homelessness and justice systems</b> including early intervention/prevention for people leaving institutions.	Benchmarked strategies
<b>1.14</b> <b>Advocate for better integration between homelessness, housing, and health</b> systems including retention and expansion of local services.	Benchmarked strategies
<b>1.15</b> <b>Advocate to the Victorian Government and Homes Victoria</b> for interim housing solutions and for properly resourced and effective programs to support people experiencing homelessness to find and keep housing	Benchmarked strategies

## Objective 2: Enable access to social housing

Support the sustainability of social housing in Port Phillip (including in the growth area of Fishermans Bend), so that those with the greatest need have access to safe, secure, and supported homes.

The 'alignment' column in Table 4 shows how these actions align with other Council strategies and plans.

Table 4 Actions to support Objective 2:

Protecting existing stock		Alignment
2.1	<b>Support the retention of and</b> delivery of new social and affordable housing on public land, including through the redevelopment of public housing sites, where there is a level of community support.	Housing Strategy
2.2	<b>Advocate to the Victorian Government</b> to support the redevelopment of ageing public housing stock and process for supporting tenants.	Community Engagement
2.3	<b>Advocate to support renewal of social housing assets</b> owned by community housing, not-for-profit organisations, or ethical investors, where this will realise an increase in supply and/or diversity and there is a level of community support.	In Our Backyard
2.4	<b>Explore options such as rates exemptions or reduction and concessions</b> for planning fees for social housing projects which house those connected to Port Phillip.	Benchmarked Strategies

Safe and supportive environments		Alignment
2.5	<b>Ensure housing and infrastructure plans respond</b> to the challenges faced by intersectional groups by including the voices of people with lived experience from the early design phase to completion.	Strategy GIA
2.6	<b>Partner, and deliver prevention, support, and housing for older people</b> through the Sponsorship Housing Program	Positive Ageing Policy, Think and Act Review
2.7	<b>Investigate available housing and emergency accommodation</b> and consider options for improving or increasing, relative to Council's role <sup>8</sup> .	Community Safety Roundtable
2.8	<b>Identify and advocate for new emergency and short-term accommodation options</b> , with culturally appropriate spaces specifically for First Nations community.	Community Safety Roundtable #9
Partnerships for impact		Alignment
2.9	<b>Advocate and where appropriate support innovative housing models tailored to local needs</b> , such as integrated older persons housing, Common Ground or alternative support models for singles experiencing homelessness, Foyers for young people, Community Land Trusts and other emerging models.	In Our Backyard
2.10	<b>Facilitate and broker new projects with benevolent private developers</b> who are willing to develop projects that include affordable private housing, social housing, or Specialist Disability Accommodation (SDA), prioritising housing for people with connection to Port Phillip.	In Our Backyard
2.11	<b>Facilitate partnerships between businesses, developers, community housing organisations</b> , and different levels of government to identify and explore opportunities for social housing.	Positive Ageing Policy
2.12	<b>Provide cash contributions and other assistance</b> to support local community housing organisations leverage State or Commonwealth funding to develop community housing on Council land and/or air space where there is a level of community support.	In Our Backyard

<sup>8</sup> Provide more accommodation for rough sleepers (for example, new investment and using empty Council buildings) (DEP P1/R2)  
 Identify and advocate for new emergency and short-term accommodation options, with culturally appropriate spaces specifically for First Nations community (CSRT#9).  
 Conduct an immediate audit of available housing and emergency accommodation along with options for transfer/use/repurposing of Council owned land for affordable housing development (CSRT#8)

### Objective 3: Improve access to Affordable and Key Worker Housing

Ensure that people who contribute to the vibrancy and functioning of our city—such as teachers, nurses, artists, and hospitality workers—can afford to live locally.

The ‘alignment’ column in Table 5 shows how these actions align with other Council strategies and plans.

Table 5: Actions to support Objective 3:

Facilitating new supply		Alignment
3.1	<b>Identify opportunities for affordable housing on Council land or strategic sites</b> in or near activity centres and undertake review of planning controls to facilitate appropriate affordable housing development where there is a level of community support.	Housing Strategy
3.2	<b>Identify suitable Council-owned land and/or air space for community housing projects</b> prioritising individuals with specific needs and/or connection to Port Phillip <sup>9</sup> where there is a level of community support.	In Our Backyard
3.3	<b>Explore targeted incentives</b> to support affordable housing, including fast-tracking planning permits.	Housing Strategy
3.4	<b>Work with other local Councils through the Municipal Association Victoria (MAV) and Melbourne 9 (M9) group of Councils</b> to advocate for increased affordable housing in City of Port Phillip.	Benchmarked Strategies
Innovative delivery models		Alignment
3.5	<b>Support emerging affordable housing models</b> , including affordable Build to Rent, Rent to Buy, shared equity housing, and Community Land Trusts.	Housing Strategy
3.6	<b>Encourage the private sector</b> and other organisations to pilot new models to provide affordable housing.	Benchmarked strategies
3.7	<b>Investigate and if feasible establish a vehicle (e.g. Trust or agency) to administer affordable housing</b> development contributions from developers and landowners.	Housing Strategy

<sup>9</sup> Priority cohorts identified through the GIA include single people, older people, people experiencing homelessness including LGBTIQ+ persons at risk of homelessness and First Nations people

Address market pressures		Alignment
3.8	<b>Support the development of a state-wide affordable housing register</b> to record voluntary agreements with the private sector.	Housing Strategy
3.9	<b>Investigate the impact of short stay rental accommodation</b> on rental affordability and explore options for mitigating.	Community engagement
3.10	<b>Advocate for local regulatory mechanisms</b> to mitigate displacement caused by short stay rental accommodation.	Community engagement

### Objective 4: Support Stability in the Private Rental Market

Promote stability, equity, and wellbeing for renters by supporting initiatives that strengthen rights and access within the private rental market.

The 'alignment' column in Table 6 shows how these actions align with other Council strategies and plans.

Table 6: Actions to support Objective 4:

Advocacy for reform		Alignment
4.1	<b>Continue to advocate for planning reforms</b> to introduce a mandatory requirement for affordable housing.	Housing Strategy
4.2	<b>Develop Council's Advocacy position to better support renters</b> across issues of lease lengths, Commonwealth funding support, short stay accommodation and dispute resolution.	Community engagement
Information and support		Alignment
4.3	<b>Provide renters with access to information, advice, and local support services</b> to help navigate the rental system.	Community engagement
Quality standards		Alignment
4.4	<b>Encourage and support compliance with minimum rental standards</b> , through information and resources to renters and landlords, to ensure safe and healthy living conditions .	Community engagement

### Objective 5: Strengthening Places that Support Housing Stability and Homelessness Solutions

Shape inclusive neighbourhoods and public spaces that foster housing stability, resilience, and pathways out of homelessness through thoughtful design, collaboration, and planning—ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home in Port Phillip.

The 'alignment' column in Table 7 shows how these actions align with other Council strategies and plans.

Table 7: Actions to support Objective 5:

Design for inclusion		Alignment
5.1	<b>Partner and deliver</b> thoughtfully designed safe, accessible, and welcoming services and public spaces.	Benchmarked Strategies
5.2	<b>Activate public spaces beyond 9 am to 5 pm</b> , and ensure well-lit areas for safety/security.	Benchmarked Strategies
5.3	<b>Partner and deliver access to support through response to enquiries, education and information for business/residents</b> for a safe/welcoming public realm.	Benchmarked Strategies
5.4	<b>Identify, develop, and sustain accessible, safe daytime social spaces</b> ('hubs') with appropriate and relevant facilities and access to therapeutic, wrap-around support services for rough sleepers and vulnerable community members.	Community Safety Roundtable
5.5	<b>Support the establishment of a Community Gathering Place</b> that respects gathering as a cultural norm and practice for Aboriginal people.	Reconciliation Action Plan
5.6	<b>Advocate for the establishment of a coordinated, single access point</b> for persons experiencing homelessness and mental health issues.	Community Engagement
5.7	<b>Support the provision of and accessibility to support services</b> , and associated infrastructure, to improve mental health and homelessness support.	Community Engagement

Place based responses		Alignment
5.8	<b>Deliver training to support and equip relevant staff</b> to contribute to ending homelessness.	Think and Act Review
5.9	<b>Provide relevant staff training on the trauma of rough sleeping,</b> response and referrals.	Think and Act Review
Integrated planning		Alignment
5.10	<b>Advocate to relevant agencies and governments</b> to ensure appropriate infrastructure is in place to support the growth of housing.	Benchmarked Strategies
5.11	<b>Explore colocation of Council services or facilities</b> with new social, affordable and community housing development where practical and viable, and where this could improve outcomes and amenity for the community.	Benchmarked Strategies



Aerial view of Port Melbourne, featuring Station Pier.

# Reporting, implementation and monitoring

## 3. Reporting

The City of Port Phillip's Homelessness and Affordable Housing Strategy guides the ways Council will support people experiencing housing stress and homelessness over the next ten years. The strategy will be reviewed at year five to ensure alignment with current Council priorities and budget priorities and commitments.

The strategies achievements will be tracked through the organisation's quarterly CEO Reports reporting mechanisms. Each year of the strategy will have an annual overview in Council's annual report.

These reporting mechanisms ensure that targets are met, and milestones and achievements are being tracked consistently. This allows necessary adjustments to be made as needed if unexpected delays occur.

## 4. Implementation and monitoring

This Strategy will be delivered under Council's homelessness and affordable housing service, which is made up of the following sub-services:

- Homelessness support
- Affordable housing support

Each year, this service area will develop an annual service plan, which will include specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, time-bound actions against each of the activity areas identified in this Strategy.

At the end of each year, the service will review the implementation of the previous years' Service Plan, including identifying:

- which actions were successfully completed
- which actions were not successfully completed, and why
- which actions should be extended into the following years' service plan, and which should be discontinued.

This review will inform the development of the next annual Service Plan.

The following tables outline the outcome indicators and performance measures which will measure systemic changes:

- Functional Zero; Working towards functional Zero via the Port Phillip Zero Initiative with three people or less sleeping rough at any one time.

This will be achieved through direct support and service coordination in addition to:

- o Planning levers: where eligible developments successfully deliver affordable housing units.
- o Advocacy success: where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for affordable housing, social housing and homelessness are utilised to the fullest extent possible.
- o Improved perceptions of safety and pride in neighbourhoods: achieving scores of >7.6 in community satisfaction across measures relating to safety, pride, connection and enjoyment of neighbourhoods, and agreement that City of Port Phillip is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone.

Measures relating to each objective are as follows:

Table 8: Overall Outcome Indicators for the four overarching objectives

Outcome measures	Target
	2025-2035
<b>Objective 1: Strengthen community responses to homelessness</b>	
Work towards functional Zero via Port Phillip Zero initiative.	Average capacity of housing system > existing need (proven by data)
By Name List (BNL)	Individuals on the list = 3 or less
<b>Objective 2. Enable access to social housing</b>	
<b>Advocacy success:</b> where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for social housing and homelessness are utilised to the fullest extent possible.	Opportunities utilised
<b>Objective 3: Improve access to affordable and key worker housing</b>	
<b>Planning levers:</b> where eligible developments successfully deliver affordable housing units to the fullest extent possible.	Opportunities utilised

Outcome measures	Target
<b>Objective 4: Support stability in the private rental market</b>	
Advocacy success: where advocacy opportunities for improving outcomes for homelessness and affordable housing are utilised to the fullest extent possible.	Opportunities utilised
<b>Objective 5: Strengthen places that support housing stability and homelessness solutions</b>	
<p>Uplift in Community Satisfaction Survey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I have a sense of safety and security in Port Phillip</li> <li>• I feel proud of, connected, and enjoy living in my neighbourhood</li> </ul> <p>The City of Port Phillip is a welcoming and supportive place for everyone including people from varied cultural and religious backgrounds, abilities, ages, genders, and sexual orientation</p>	>7.6

Table 9: Outcome indicators for a Healthy and Connected Community. Targets for the short, medium, and long term may be decreased, maintain, increase.

Outcome indicators	Past results			Target	Forecast		
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Short term	Medium term	Long term
Health and wellbeing index score (new)	NA	NA	NA	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
Number of people experiencing homelessness on the Port Phillip By-Name List	94	53	60	<50	<30	<30	<30
Number of people actively sleeping rough	24	no data	15	<15	<15	<15	<15
Proportion of residents who agree Port Phillip is a welcoming and supportive community for everyone	77%	74%	84%	8.1	TBD	TBD	TBD
Community satisfaction with services to people experiencing disadvantage	no data	no data	no data	6.6	TBD	TBD	TBD
% of new rentals in the year that were suitable for affordable to low-income households	NA	NA	0.60%	0.90%	0.90%	0.90%	0.90%

Table 10: Service performance measures – homelessness and affordable housing

Performance measures	Past results			Target			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Number of older persons housed	NA	NA	50	>50	>50	>50	>50

Table 11: Service statistics – homelessness and affordable housing. Expected trend: + increase; o no change; - decrease

Performance measures	Past results			Target			
	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
Customer housing and homelessness enquiries	NA	NA	344	455	TBD	TBD	TBD

## 5. Funding approach

Council has committed budget for the next four years to support the provision of resources through staffing, service agreements with local community providers and cash contributions to support community housing providers including:

- \$600,000 per annum for capital contributions for four years
- \$500,000 for the further six years funded through delayed repayment of internal borrowings and reduced contributions to the municipal growth reserve

Additionally, several of the actions outlined in the strategy will explore options for air-rights/land contributions which could support community housing providers to leverage additional funding from state government for the build of new premises.



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