



Frankston City Housing Forum and Roundtables 2022

**SUMMARY REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE
FRANKSTON CITY STRATEGIC HOUSING AND
HOMELESSNESS ALLIANCE**

February 2023

Acknowledgement of Country

Frankston Zero acknowledges the Bunurong people of the Kulin Nation as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waters in and around Frankston City, and value and recognise local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultures, heritage and connection to land as a proud part of a shared identity for Frankston City.

Frankston Zero pays respect to Elders past and present and recognises their importance in maintaining knowledge, traditions and culture in our community.

Frankston Zero also respectfully acknowledges the Bunurong Land Council as the Registered Aboriginal Party responsible for managing the Aboriginal cultural heritage of the land and waters where Frankston City is located.

Report prepared for the Frankston Zero Executive Group, February 2022

Contents

<i>Foreword by Frankston Zero Chair.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Acronyms and Definitions</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Executive Summary.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Executive Summary of Recommendations.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Background</i>	<i>11</i>
<i>Methodology.....</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Summary of discussions from the roundtables and recommendations.....</i>	<i>14</i>
1. <i>Private Rental Housing.....</i>	<i>14</i>
2. <i>Social Housing.....</i>	<i>19</i>
3. <i>Rooming Houses in Frankston.....</i>	<i>21</i>
4. <i>Crisis and Emergency Accommodation in Frankston</i>	<i>24</i>
5. <i>Capacity Building.....</i>	<i>26</i>
<i>References.....</i>	<i>27</i>
<i>Appendices.....</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Appendix 1: Notes from the Private Rental Housing in Frankston roundtable</i>	<i>29</i>
<i>Appendix 2: Notes from the Social Housing in Frankston roundtable</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>Appendix 3: Notes from the Rooming Houses in Frankston roundtable.....</i>	<i>35</i>
<i>Appendix 4: Notes from the crisis and emergency accommodation in Frankston roundtable</i>	<i>38</i>
<i>Appendix 5: Background and Attendance.....</i>	<i>41</i>
<i>Appendix 6: CHIA Vic Affordable Housing Resources.....</i>	<i>42</i>

Foreword by Frankston Zero Chair

A key element of our work with Frankston Zero has been to provide the opportunity to share knowledge and utilise the collective wisdom to understand the impact of the housing crisis in the City of Frankston and strengthen our work towards eradicating rough sleeping.

We were pleased to convene a housing forum and a series of roundtables to discuss and dig deeper into housing and possible solutions to address the shortage of affordable housing.

Data presented at the forum demonstrated that demand for rental housing far exceeds supply, in a supplier's market where prices have jumped alarmingly over the last 20 years, and even in the short months since the forum. In addition, the supply of social and affordable housing in Frankston City, as indeed across the region, is inadequate to meet existing need and that coupled with the crisis in private rental housing this situation will only get worse.

The consequence is that more and more people will either move out of area or into housing with friends and family for varying periods of time placing increasing stress on these tenancies. If these are not viable options for these people, they will have no choice but to enter the short-term accommodation market characterised by the many private rooming houses of the area.

As the report shows, these are places of varying quality and significant concern where coordinated action already underway must be supported and enhanced with utmost urgency.

On the theme of safety, the report considers the almost complete absence of quality funded crisis accommodation and the reliance on an expensive and poorly regulated private system of hotels, motels, and caravan parks. What is most apparent is that private market mechanisms are not fit-for-purpose for the Frankston Zero client group.

The report concludes with the ethical responsibility to improve the service system response and considers the question of capacity to make some recommendations to improve the overall capacity of the sector to address the housing emergency facing Frankston City.

Jackie Galloway

CEO, Peninsula Community Legal Centre

Acronyms and Definitions

Affordable Home Ownership	Affordable Housing, where a household that meets defined income eligibility requirements purchases a property at a rate that is affordable for their household, and where a subsidy provided to support the housing outcome is appropriately secured to ensure future repayment and reinvestment.
Affordable Housing	Defined in the <i>Planning and Environment Act 1987</i> as housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households.
Affordable Housing Agreement	The parameters agreed between a council and a developer through the planning system to deliver an <i>Affordable Housing Contribution</i> .
Affordable Housing Contribution	A contribution made by a landowner or developer towards an Affordable Housing outcome.
Affordable Rental Housing	Housing that is provided at a discount to rent to households that meet the PE Act or Victorian Housing Register income eligibility requirements.
By-Name List (BNL)	A By-Name List is a near-to-real-time list of all individuals who are sleeping rough in a defined locality. Regular monitoring of the locality and updating of the list allows agencies involved in service coordination to know the people actively sleeping rough by their name and to identify who is new to the area, and who has moved out of rough sleeping and either into housing, out of area or into some other form of non-homeless accommodation, such as a jail or a psychiatric institution. It also allows the group to know who has died.
Community Housing	Affordable housing managed by not-for-profit organisations.
Community Housing Organisations	Not-for-profit organisations that manage Affordable Housing. Community Housing Organisations include but are not limited to Registered Housing Agencies.
Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA)	A non-taxable income supplement, payable to people who receive a government support payment and rent in the private rental market or community housing.
Eligible Household	A household that meets the income threshold set out in a Governor in Council Order (for Affordable Housing), or as set by the Director of Housing for the Victorian Housing Register, and that meets any other eligibility requirements (residency, asset threshold).
Homelessness	There are many definitions of homelessness and they serve different purposes. The most commonly cited in Australia is from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS 2012) and is used for the purpose of counting people who are homeless for the Census. When a person does not have suitable accommodation alternatives, they are considered homeless if their current living arrangement: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. is in a dwelling that is inadequate, or 2. has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable, or 3. does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.
Public Housing	Social Housing that is owned and/or managed by the Victorian Government.
Registered Housing Agency	A Community Housing Organisation registered under Part VIII of the Housing Act 1983 and subject to regulation overseen by the Victorian Housing Registrar. Organisations are registered as a Housing Association or a Housing Provider.
Registrar of Housing Agencies	The Registrar of Housing Agencies, supported by the Office of the Housing Registrar, is responsible for regulatory oversight of the community housing sector in Victoria under the Housing Act 1983.
Rooming house	Low-cost single room accommodation with shared bathroom and kitchen facilities. Also (now) known as a 'Boarding house', even though meals are rarely provided as part of the rate. Typically, of high cost and (very) low quality with no security of tenure.
Rough sleeping	The term 'rough sleeping' is defined by the Australian Bureau of Statistics as anyone who is literally without shelter and living in public spaces. It includes people living in improvised dwellings, tents or sleeping out (footpaths, squares, parks, under bridges) (ABS 2016)

Residual Land Value	A method for calculating the value of development land. This is done by subtracting all costs associated with the development, including profit but excluding the cost of the land from the total value of the development.
Section 173 Agreement	A legally binding agreement between council and a landowner. The agreement remains with the land, regardless of any change of ownership.
SHS	Specialist Homelessness Service
Social Housing	Defined in the Housing Act as <i>public housing</i> (owned and managed by the State Government) and housing owned, controlled or managed by a participating registered agency (a <i>Registered Housing Agency</i>).
Special Purpose Vehicle	A subsidiary company formed to undertake a specific business purpose or activity, such as Affordable Housing.
THM	The Victorian Transitional Housing Management program was established in 1997. It is a partnership between a specialist property manager (Transitional Housing Manager) and a support service to provide interim accommodation for people supported by their support service while they make the transition to long-term appropriate housing and independent living.
Victorian Housing Register	The register for households that apply for and are determined to be eligible for <i>Social Housing</i> in Victoria.

Executive Summary

The inaugural Frankston City Housing Forum was held on 6 October 2022 to discuss the impact of the housing crisis on the municipality through the lens of the Frankston Zero response to eradicate rough sleeping in Frankston City.

The forum was followed by a series of four roundtable events focusing on the private rental market, crisis or emergency accommodation, rooming houses and social housing, which includes subsidised community and public housing. Here members of the community joined in the conversation, who with the support of three expert facilitators, discussed the issues faced across each of these areas with a focus on solutions and ideas for improvement.

In total, over 80 people participated in the forum and roundtable events, including the community, specialist homelessness agencies, government bodies and industry experts. Presentations included an overview of the Frankston Zero initiative, data on the local impact of the housing crisis, lived experiences and the policy landscape.

This report provides an overview of the forum and roundtable events along with solutions-focused recommendations on how the community, government bodies, homelessness agencies and others can work together to tackle the impact of the housing crisis in Frankston City, improving the homelessness service system response and access to suitable social and affordable housing.

The recommendations in this report are being presented to the Frankston City Strategic Housing and Homelessness Alliance (Strategic Alliance). The Strategic Alliance brings together services with a commitment to alleviating homelessness in Frankston City to develop a shared agenda for improving, aligning and expanding the capacity of Frankston City's housing and homelessness service system.

Executive Summary of Recommendations

The following are the recommendations across the four areas of concern formulated at the Roundtables.

Private rental

1. The Strategic Alliance to commit resources to combine data (public and agency) and build the evidence base of those living in private rental housing to give a true and current picture of private rental housing in Frankston City, especially people at risk of and then becoming homeless. This would enable Frankston Zero and other relevant services to provide more targeted approaches and improve the overall service system response. Further, this data could potentially be used to connect people experiencing homelessness to the interests and needs of socially minded private property owners and managers, and better educate real estate agents.
2. The Strategic Alliance to support the promotion of Frankston City as a private rental investment opportunity with the goal of expanding the stock of private rental housing and advocate to Council to offer developer incentives.
3. The Strategic Alliance to work with interested parties to review innovative models for attracting private rental housing to Frankston City including Build to Rent, affordable private rental via social minded private property owners in programs such as the HomeGround Real Estate Agency and using incentives such as rate relief for preferred projects.

4. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Private Rental Access Program (PRAP), including the PRAP Guidelines and PRAP Stream 3, to improve support for people to be able to remain in their tenancies and consider if it is appropriate for the current environment and relative to current and emerging needs.
5. The Strategic Alliance to work to develop and distribute better information about and the resources available for at-risk private rental tenancies, including the PRAP and its 3 streams, PRAP Plus and develop similar models, such as Home Connect and the Young Renters programs, within the area. The Strategic Alliance should ensure this information is easily available including with 'First to know' agencies such as Centrelink and Real Estate Agents.
6. The Strategic Alliance to attract government or philanthropic funding to develop education and information programs tailored to private real estate agents aimed at developing better relationships and promoting successful programs and pathways for 'at-risk' tenants, aimed at supporting tenants to sustain private rental housing and manage transitions between tenancies.
7. The Strategic Alliance to advocate to the State and Federal Governments for the following changes:
 - a. Increases in Commonwealth Rent Assistance
 - b. Reforms to Residential Tenancies Legislation to prevent exclusionary practices

Social housing

8. The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for an increase in social housing across Frankston City and adjacent local Government Areas. Needed examples include Permanent Supportive Housing in either congregate or decentralized models, a Youth Foyer, and an increase in general social housing stock, in particular 1-bedroom units.
9. The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for a review of barriers to inclusion on the Victorian Housing Register and to practices which remove people from the register without their knowledge or consent.
10. The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for improved coordination between the Homes Victoria and Frankston Zero project, with prioritized allocation of social and transitional housing to people on the Frankston By-Name List.
11. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for an audit of vacant land within the municipality identifying its ownership and potential availability for the development of future social housing. The audit should be timed to occur prior to completion of the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build funding rounds. The results of the audit should be shared with potential investment, development, and service delivery partners for strategic planning purposes to assess the feasibility of these sites with opportunities to increase social and affordable housing supply, and the Alliance should advocate for any surplus government owned land (Federal, State and Local) to be used for this purpose.
12. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the implementation of a Choice Based Letting system of social housing allocation to improve the retention of social housing for people on the Victorian Housing Register.

13. The Strategic Alliance advocates that Frankston City Council clearly signal its intention to support an increase in the amount of social housing in its strategic and planning documents and in doing so continue to advocate for the value of social housing, and to establish a policy position on its role in investing Council-owned land in social and affordable housing.
14. The Strategic Alliance and Frankston City Council should build support for social and affordable housing within the local community through community engagement and communications campaigns aimed at de-stigmatizing social and affordable housing.

Rooming Houses

15. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the establishment and resourcing of a State level Rooming House Advisory Council made up of representatives of all key stakeholders and local area Rooming House working groups also resourced by the State Government.
16. The Strategic Alliance to convene a Frankston Rooming House working group, connected to the existing Melbourne Metropolitan Rooming House Group and the State level Rooming House Advisory Council when established. Its purpose will be to collate data, monitor activity and provide advice to the Alliance and the State level council. Their work will include
 - Support greater connection between all IAP / Emergency housing providers and the state level Rooming House Advisory Council to ensure coordination of referrals, closures and support to people housed in rooming houses.
 - Support for the planning and coordination of the closure of problematic rooming.
 - Participation in work to update minimum standards and update fit and proper test for operators.
 - The development of more accessible information developed for all residents of rooming houses, led by the State level Rooming House Advisory Council
 - Investigate and pilot a rating system for private rooming house providers, led by the State level Rooming House Advisory Council
17. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for Frankston Council to adequately resource its prescribed regulatory responsibilities with respect to Rooming Houses and provide regular reporting to the Frankston Rooming House working group on its activities, actions, and outcomes.
18. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP), which must receive adequate funding to ensure improved coverage and enforcement of regulation.
19. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for Consumer Affairs Victoria to conduct consultations with local councils and community organisations working in the sector to identify rooming houses that are in breach of the legislation and develop a compliance strategy and take enforcement action against rooming house operators who are not compliant
20. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Housing Options workers role, in particular the online accommodation directory which could be made accessible to all homelessness entry points.

Crisis and emergency accommodation

21. The Strategic Alliance to lead work to develop and distribute educative materials aimed at countering stigma and reinforcing messaging around the harm of homelessness, including the framing of homelessness in the language of natural disasters.
22. The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) expended in the area and ascertain how much is being spent and where, and whether it is sufficient to meet the current and likely future (2023-2025) needs of the catchment.
23. The Strategic Alliance to advocate to the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for the construction of government funded purpose-built crisis accommodations. These should focus on 'at-risk' cohorts including youth, families escaping family violence, older people, and singles with design linked to data on need and purpose, and designs and construction which enables the transition of these sites to long-term affordable or social housing when appropriate (i.e., when the demand for shelter falls)
24. The Strategic Alliance to convene a project reference group made up of members with appropriate expertise. The reference group will be responsible for developing a business case exploring a range of alternative emergency accommodation models for Frankston. Models need to include a set of standards for what is acceptable and not acceptable in any form of homelessness shelter with respect to amenity and safety, alongside a basic level of support to link people into more long-term options and draw upon existing community goodwill.

Capacity building

25. The Strategic Alliance recognizes that there are community members (Seaford Housing Action Collective is one example) who seek a greater voice and inclusion in the work of the Strategic Alliance and will support this wherever possible.
26. The Strategic Alliance should invest in improved data and analytics capabilities across multiple data sources: population and demography, social housing, private housing, legal centers, homelessness and family violence services, universities, and business developments, including combining resources and information across Alliance partners
27. The Strategic Alliance should develop and undertake a strategic research agenda focused on locally important issues, requirements, and their impacts upon the supply of and access to needed housing and accommodation types. This includes developing the capability to swiftly assess the appropriateness of emerging innovative ideas (e.g., Homelessness Bus or Winter Shelters).
28. The Strategic Alliance advocate that Frankston Council build agreed ideas and strategic directions into its new Housing Strategy 2023 and the associated Affordable Housing Policy, Safer Community Policy and Strategy and Planning scheme

Background

The Frankston Zero initiative was launched during National Homelessness Week in 2021 with the aim to end rough sleeping homelessness in Frankston City by May 2023.

At the time of the Forum the Frankston Zero initiative had been operational for 15 months. During this time, a total of 139 people sleeping rough had come onto the By-Name-List (Table 1). While the numbers of people sleeping rough had significantly decreased over this period (Diagram 1), most people being removed from the By-Name-List had either moved out of area (Inactive – See Table 1) or moved into more sheltered forms of homelessness (Diagram 2), and by October 2022 only 19 people had been housed.

This poses a problem for the Frankston Zero initiative, which aims to achieve functional zero rough sleeping homelessness by May 2023. The lack of housing outcomes was one of the motivating factors for the Frankston City Housing Forum and Roundtables. Compounding this issue is the absence of housing type required by the people remaining on the By-Name-List (Diagram 3), with almost 15% requiring forms of permanent supportive housing which do not exist in the Frankston City area.

Table 1: Frankston Zero outcomes after 15 months (ending October 2022)

	Total	Active	Outflows	Inactive
Female	44 (32%)	23 (37%)	5 (26%)	16 (28%)
Male	95 (68%)	39 (63%)	14 (74%)	42 (73%)
Total	139	62 (44%)	19 (14%)	58 (42%)
Known Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander	15 (11% of total on BNL)	4 (7% of all active)	5 (26% of all outflows)	7 (12% of inactive)

Diagram 1: Frankston Zero BNL June 2021 to October 2022 – Changes in sleeping rough

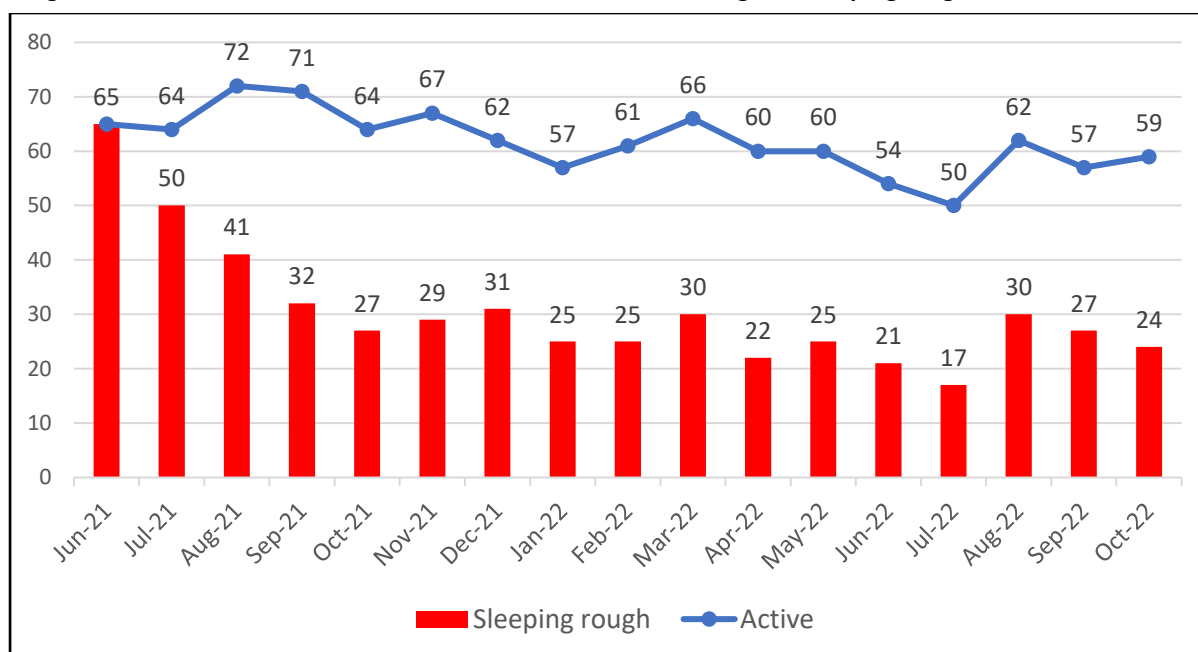


Diagram 2: Frankston Zero BNL June 2021 to October 2022 – Changes in living situations

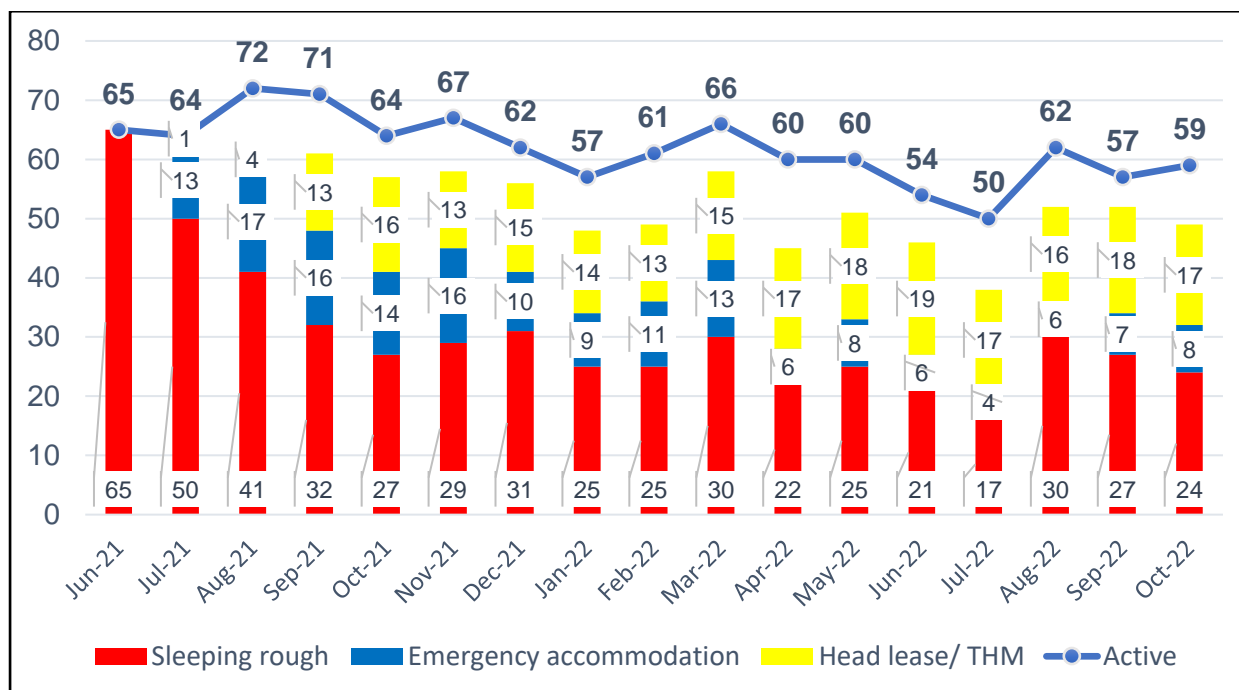
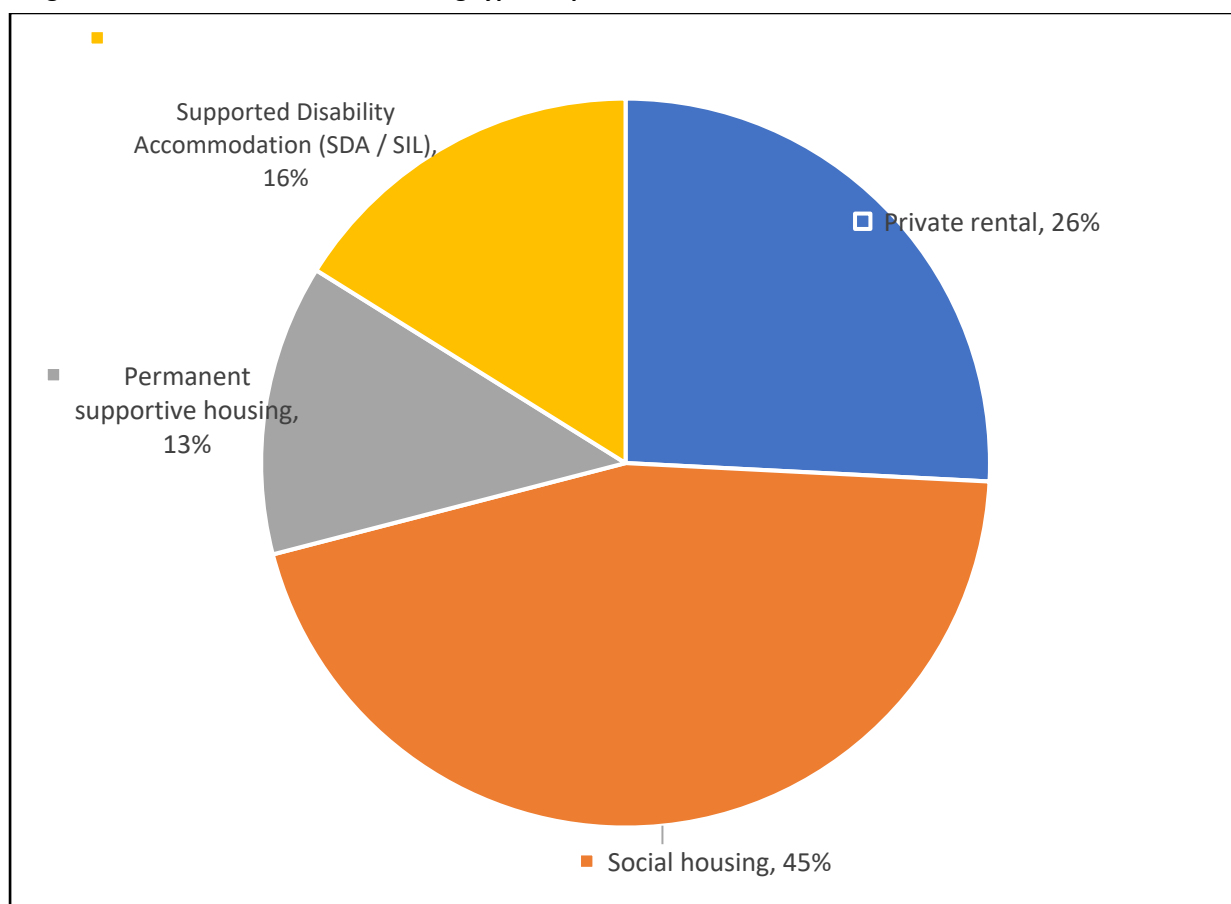


Diagram 3: Frankston Zero BNL – Housing types required



Methodology

Jackie Galloway, CEO Peninsula Community Legal Centre and Frankston Zero Chair and Ruth Gordon Homelessness Network Coordinator Southern Region co-hosted the event acting as MC.

Forum presentations

Frankston City Mayor Nathan Conroy provided the Forum welcome.

Jackie Galloway, CEO Peninsula Community Legal Centre and Frankston Zero Chair, provided the introduction and closing presentations.

Frankston Zero Explained, a local service system response to eliminate homelessness, George Hatvani, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing.

The local impact: Homelessness, Housing and Lived Experiences, connecting the data on the housing crisis with lived experiences, George Hatvani, Functional Zero Manager, Launch Housing.

Local housing needs: What has Emerged from the By-Name-List, Amanda Williams, Service Manager, Neami National; Fiona Jacobi, Coordinator Outer Region Rough Sleepers Response, Launch Housing.

The Policy Landscape, the supply and policy landscape for housing and accommodation, Dr Andrew Hollows, General Manager Getting Housing, Launch Housing.

Panel Q&A with Loretta Buckley, Manager The Salvation Army Homelessness (Frankston and Rosebud); Steve Phillips, Manager, Community Support Frankston; and Dr Andrew Hollows, General Manager Getting Housing, Launch Housing.

Introduction to post-Forum Roundtables.

Roundtables

Private Rental Housing, Thursday 13 October, 1pm-3pm, Frankston North Community Centre, 26 Mahogany Avenue, Frankston North – facilitated by Mark O'Brien, Strategic Adviser, Commissioner for Residential Tenancies.

Crisis and Emergency Accommodation, Monday 17 October, 1pm-3pm, Frankston North Community Centre, 26 Mahogany Avenue, Frankston North – facilitated by Ruth Gordon, Homelessness Network Coordinator Southern Region.

Rooming Houses, Tuesday 18 October, 10am-12pm, Lyrebird Community Centre, 203 Lyrebird Drive, Carrum Downs – facilitated by Mark O'Brien, Strategic Adviser, Commissioner for Residential Tenancies.

Social Housing, Friday 4 November, 1pm-3pm, Lyrebird Community Centre, 203 Lyrebird Drive, Carrum Downs – facilitated by Stephanie Ng, Affordable Housing Business Development Officer, CHIA Vic.

Summary of discussions from the roundtables and recommendations

1. Private Rental Housing

The 2021 ABS Census showed that there are 58,888 dwellings in Frankston City, with households renting privately making up 32% of all dwellings and households renting social housing making up 2.6%, with owner occupied, fully owned, or mortgaged private housing making up the remainder (.id Community Profile).

The number of affordable private rental housing dwellings available for letting in Frankston City has declined dramatically over the last ten years. This is true for all household types, falling 95% in 20 years from 654 affordable properties in June 2002 to 36 in June 2022, but particularly for single persons (Diagrams 4 to 7).

The cost of private rental properties has increased significantly across Greater Melbourne, and in Frankston City the increase has been even more dramatic (Diagrams 8 and 9). The impact of this is that for very low to low-income groups like single persons and JobSeeker income recipients. As of June 2022, like most other LGAs in Greater Melbourne, Frankston City had become extremely unaffordable for JobSeeker income recipients (Rental Affordability Index, SGS Economics & Planning, November 2022, p. 15).

A lack of affordable private rental options means people who want to live in the area are either unable to do so, and if they work in the area face long commutes, or they are forced to pay high rents and endure housing stress. The 2021 ABS Census shows that of the 13,457 households in private rentals in Frankston City, 4,599 (34.2%) are in rental stress. This is higher than the Greater Melbourne average. This increases for very low-income earners (83.8%) and low-income earners (57.5%). (.id Housing Monitor)

“More than half of low-income Australians in the private rental market suffer rental stress, especially those in capital cities. One in five working-aged households who rent are in financial stress, defined as skipping a meal, accessing charity, pawning something or not heating the home.” (Grattan Institute September 2021)

The consequence for people already in private rental properties in Frankston City and served with a notice to vacate is that they may no longer be able to rent in the Frankston City area or they may need to move into poor quality, high cost, less-secure forms of accommodation that are in fact forms of homelessness. That is, when they have no other option except hotels, caravan parks or rooming houses, or to share with family or friends and eventually, in some cases, experience other more extreme forms of homelessness such as rough sleeping.

Social Housing is an option for those with very low incomes, however because the supply of social housing in Frankston City is also highly constrained, even for those with urgent needs, they may need to wait an average of 17 months to be allocated housing, with most waiting much longer. Furthermore, while additional social housing may be coming through the Victorian Government’s Big Housing Build, this will take time and existing demand may soak up much of that housing. This leaves many people exiting private rentals in coming months and years in danger of homelessness.

In summary, the private rental market is increasingly more of a contributor than a solution to homelessness in Frankston City. But how can we make the private rental market work better for the people who want to live in the area?

Diagram 4: Affordable private rentals 1-Bedroom June 2000 – June 2022

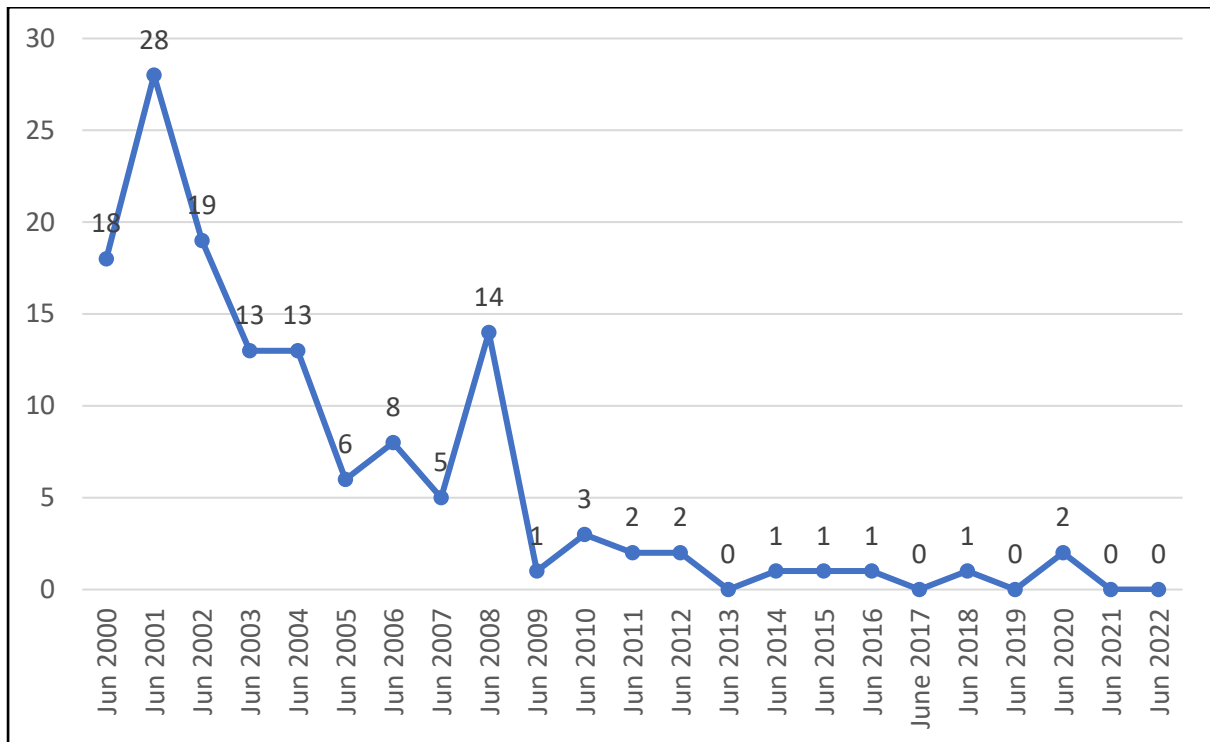


Diagram 5: Affordable private rentals 2-Bedroom June 2000 – June 2022

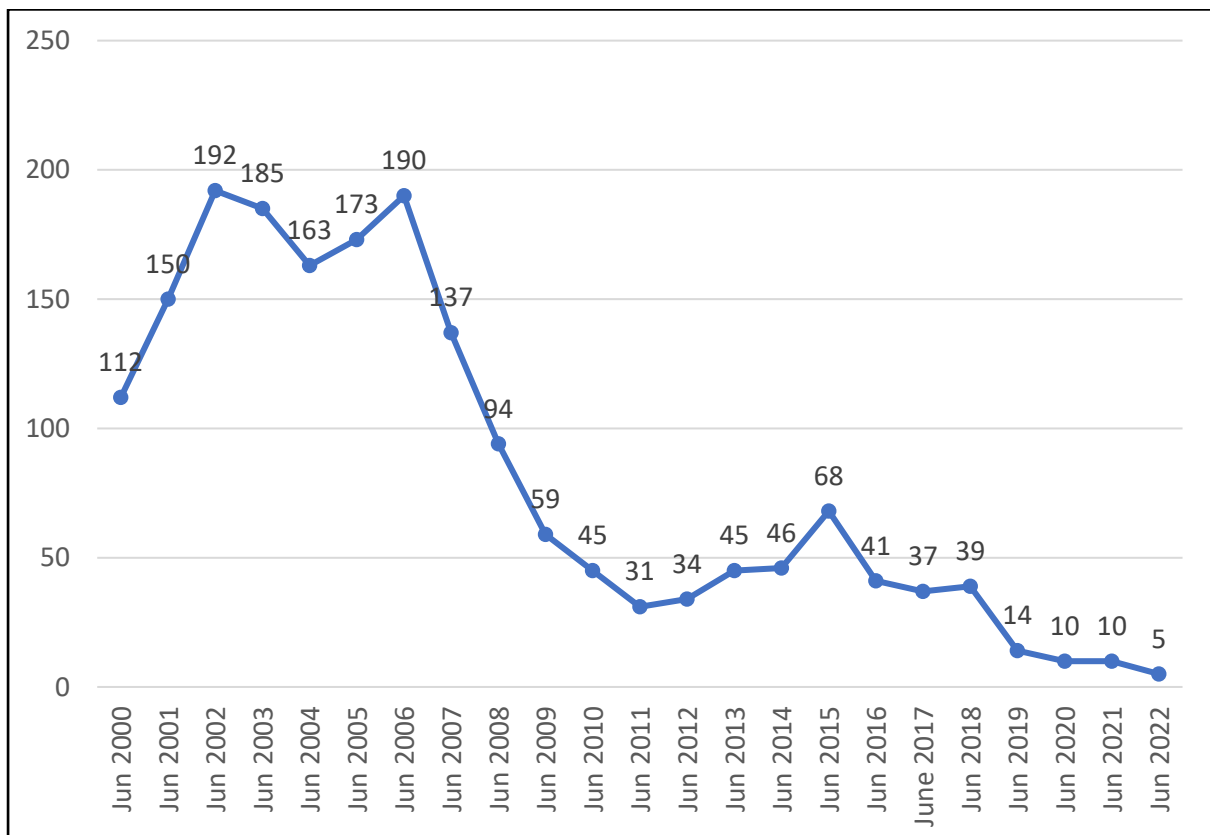


Diagram 6: Affordable private rentals 3-Bedroom June 2000 – June 2022

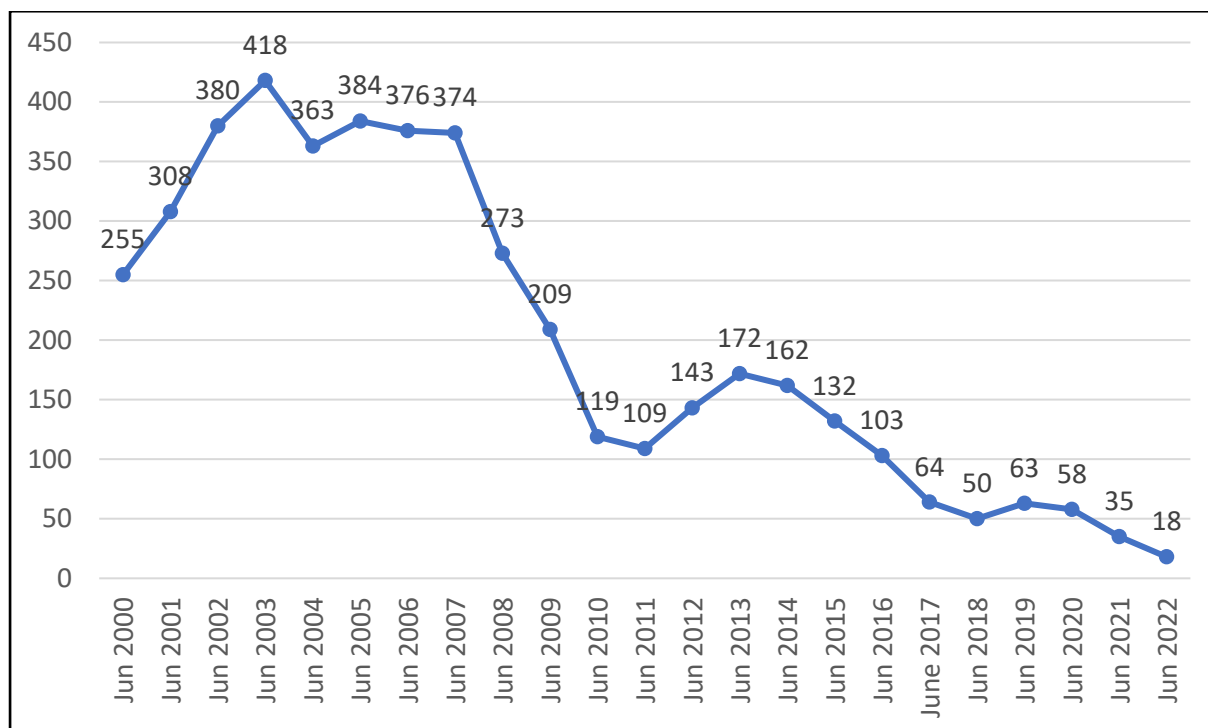


Diagram 7: Affordable private rentals 4-Bedroom June 2000 – June 2022

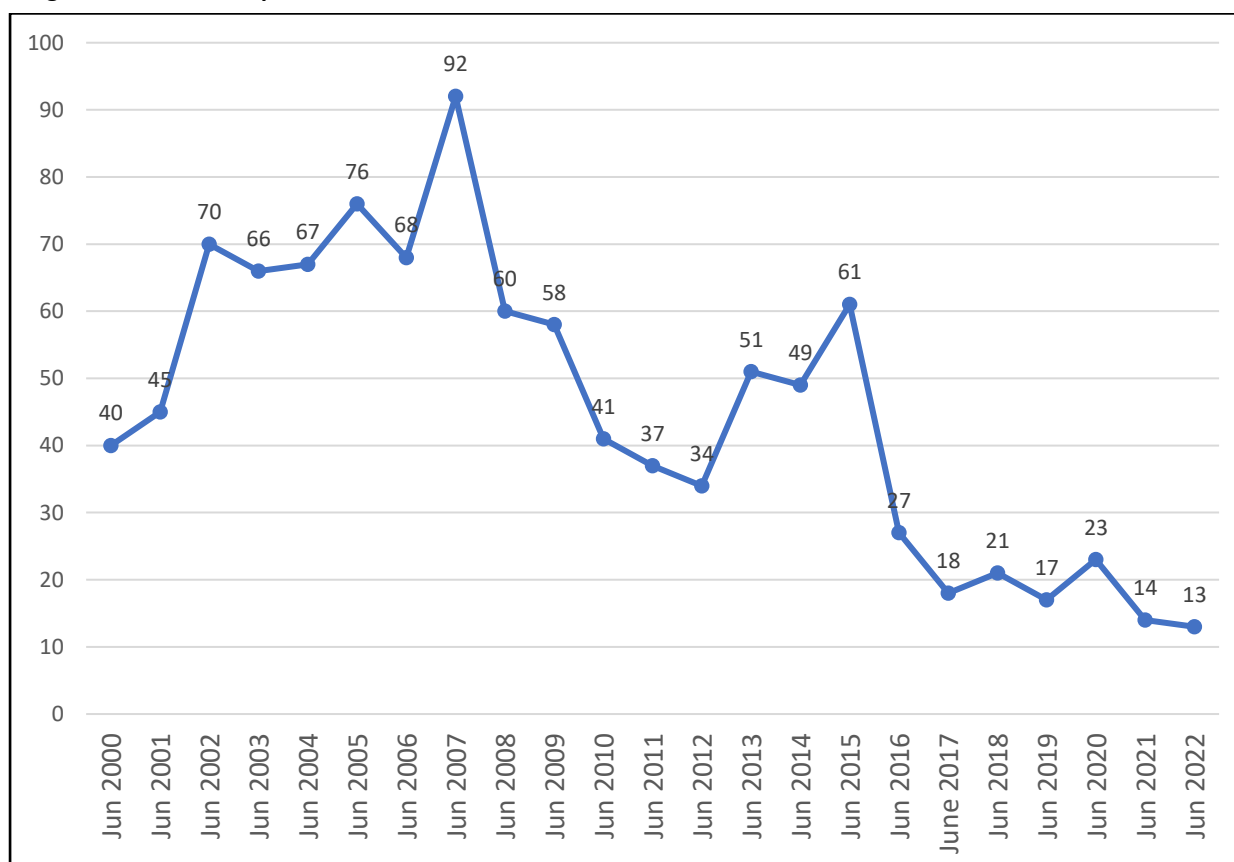
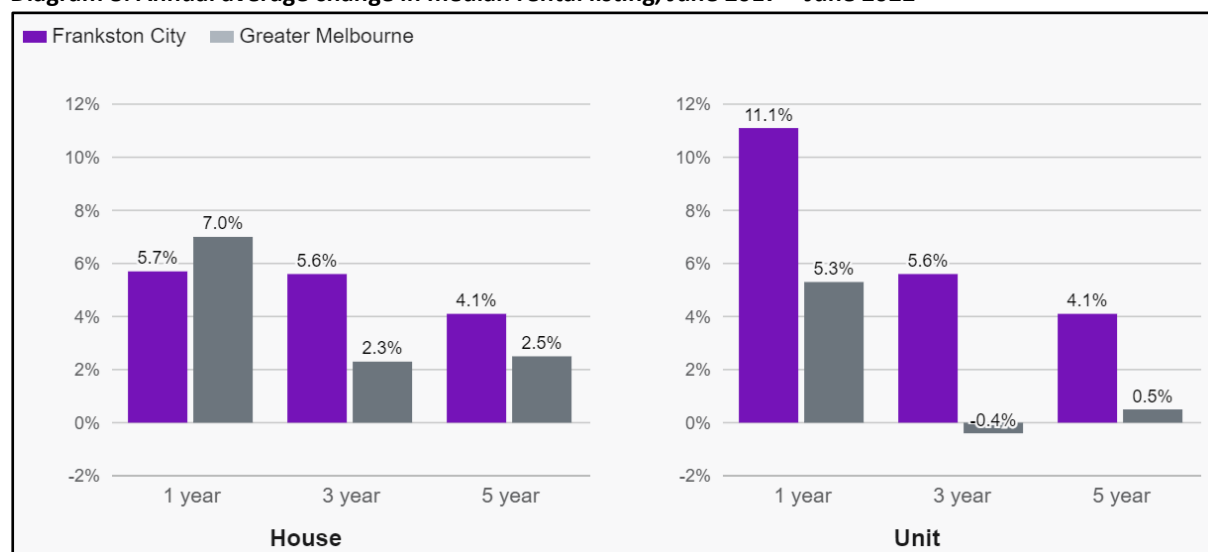


Diagram 8: Annual average change in median rental listing, June 2017 – June 2022



The following recommendations are made to the Strategic Alliance for consideration and action.

Recommendation 1:

The Strategic Alliance to commit resources to combine data (public and agency) and build the evidence base of those living in private rental housing to give a true and current picture of private rental housing in Frankston City, especially people at risk of and then becoming homeless. This would enable Frankston Zero and other relevant services to provide more targeted approaches and improve the overall service system response. Further, this data could potentially be used to connect people experiencing homelessness to the interests and needs of socially minded private property owners and managers, and better educate real estate agents.

Recommendation 2:

The Strategic Alliance to support the promotion of Frankston City as a private rental investment opportunity with the goal of expanding the stock of private rental housing and advocate to Council to offer developer incentives.

Recommendation 3:

The Strategic Alliance to work with interested parties to review innovative models for attracting private rental housing to Frankston City including Build to Rent, affordable private rental via social minded private property owners in programs such as the HomeGround Real Estate Agency and using incentives such as rate relief for preferred projects.

Recommendation 4:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Private Rental Access Program (PRAP), including the PRAP Guidelines and PRAP Stream 3, to improve support for people to be able to remain in their tenancies and consider if it is appropriate for the current environment and relative to current and emerging needs.

Recommendation 5:

The Strategic Alliance to work to develop and distribute better information about and the resources available for at-risk private rental tenancies, including the PRAP and its 3 streams, PRAP Plus and develop similar models, such as Home Connect and the Young Renters programs, within the area. The Strategic Alliance should ensure this information is easily available including with 'First to know' agencies such as Centrelink and Real Estate Agents.

Recommendation 6:

The Strategic Alliance to attract government or philanthropic funding to develop education and information programs tailored to private real estate agents aimed at developing better relationships and promoting successful programs and pathways for 'at-risk' tenants, aimed at supporting tenants to sustain private rental housing and manage transitions between tenancies.

Recommendation 7:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate to the State and Federal Governments for the following changes:

- Increases in Commonwealth Rent Assistance
- Reforms to Residential Tenancies Legislation to prevent exclusionary practices

2. Social Housing

There is a significant shortfall in social housing available for people wishing to reside in Frankston City relative to their need. This is broadly representative of a trend across all of Victoria.

Social housing makes up less than 3.5% of all housing in Victoria (86,000 dwellings), split as follows:

- Public housing (owned by state government): 80%
- Community Housing (owned by community housing organisations): 20%

As of June 2022, there were 64,168 households across all of Victoria on the wait list for social housing and average wait times for priority applicants during 2021/22 exceeded departmental targets by 45% for priority access or priority transfer, and 63% for priority access due to family violence.

Based on Victorian Housing Register (VHR) location preferences from June 2022, there were 2,634 applicants on the Priority Application list for the Frankston District and 2,074 applicants on the Register of Interest application list. With a total supply of 3,579 dwellings wait list applicants represented 132% of the total number of public and community housing available in the area.

Using 2019/20 data as a proxy for an annual turnover rate of existing stock of 7% (due to deaths, transfer, evictions and abandonments), we can see that around 250 offers are made each year, leaving 95% of the priority list still waiting for social housing at the end of the year. It should be noted that preferred waiting list area data is derived by an applicant selecting up to five location preferences per application meaning that a single applicant can be counted anywhere from one to five times in the total Victorian data set and may in fact end up housed in other areas, including adjacent districts of Cheltenham, Sandringham, Mornington Peninsula and Westernport. Nonetheless the data is clear, there is insufficient social housing stock to meet the existing demand for social housing in the Frankston district.

The following recommendations are made to the Strategic Alliance for consideration and action.

Recommendation 8:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for an increase in social housing across Frankston City and adjacent local Government Areas. Needed examples include Permanent Supportive Housing in either congregate or decentralized models, a Youth Foyer, and an increase in general social housing stock, in particular 1-bedroom units.

Recommendation 9:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for a review of barriers to inclusion on the Victorian Housing Register and to practices which remove people from the register without their knowledge or consent.

Recommendation 10:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate with the Victorian Government for improved coordination between the Homes Victoria and Frankston Zero project, with prioritized allocation of social and transitional housing to people on the Frankston By-Name List.

Recommendation 11:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for an audit of vacant land within the municipality identifying its ownership and potential availability for the development of future social housing. The audit should be timed to occur prior to completion of the Victorian Government's Big Housing Build funding rounds. The results of the audit should be shared with potential investment, development, and

service delivery partners for strategic planning purposes to assess the feasibility of these sites with opportunities to increase social and affordable housing supply, and the Alliance should advocate for any surplus government owned land (Federal, State and Local) to be used for this purpose.

Recommendation 12:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the implementation of a Choice Based Letting system of social housing allocation to improve the retention of social housing for people on the Victorian Housing Register.

Recommendation 13:

The Strategic Alliance advocates that Frankston City Council clearly signal its intention to support an increase in the amount of social housing in its strategic and planning documents and in doing so continue to advocate for the value of social housing, and to establish a policy position on its role in investing Council-owned land in social and affordable housing

Recommendation 14:

The Strategic Alliance and Frankston City Council should build support for social and affordable housing within the local community through community engagement and communications campaigns aimed at de-stigmatizing social and affordable housing.

3. Rooming Houses in Frankston

There are over 800 registered rooming houses in the south-eastern region of Greater Melbourne, with 78 in Frankston City and another 176 in the neighbouring municipalities of Kingston (9), Greater Dandenong (110), Casey (48) and the Mornington Peninsula Shire (9) as of December 2022. There is also an unknown number of unregistered operators.

The sheer scale of this sector coupled with our current and likely future reliance upon it, alongside the complexities associated with ownership (head leased or owned), management (private individuals or companies, or community managed housing associations or providers, and the manager could be the owner or an employee), and regulation, makes rooming houses one of the most challenging and urgent elements for the Strategic Alliance to address.

This is best summarised in a recent submission from Peninsula Community Legal Centre, highlighting the issues they have found when working with residents of local private rooming houses.

PCLC (Peninsula Community Legal Centre) operates in a region which has one of the largest populations of Rooming House residents in Victoria. The increasing shortage of affordable and appropriate housing has seen an increase in Victorians residing in marginal housing options such as rooming houses. This led the Centre to identify rooming house residents as a priority group and to set up an assertive rooming house outreach program covering the southern and eastern suburbs of Melbourne in 2012.

In 2020/21 the Centres Outreach Program visited 597 Rooming Houses.

Rooming houses are often used as crisis accommodation by emergency housing services due to a lack of any affordable alternatives. More often than not rooming house accommodation is seen as a last resort for people who have no other options in terms of housing. With the chronic shortage of social housing and the lack of affordable private rental housing, residents are living in rooming houses for increasingly longer periods. PCLC's RHOP data indicates a thirty-month average occupation period. Residents provide reports of a mixture of experiences to our RHOP workers. Ranging from extremely positive to very critical, many residents consistently request more suitable housing options, citing concerns about safety, poor hygiene, sub-standard conditions, excessive rents, overcrowding and social isolation. Some residents see rooming houses as a very short-term option as they find them far from ideal or unsafe (particularly women). Some residents tell us they will be moving to live on the streets as they think this is a safer option. A high proportion of rooming house residents have complex needs, including mental health problems, drug and alcohol dependence, or a history of family violence. Many receive government pensions or work in low-income employment. Residents often tell us they feel abandoned, placed in rooming houses by health and support agencies and forgotten. Residents consistently report that life is difficult, many often cannot afford to eat. Residents often complain about the cramped conditions of the properties which often cause hygiene problems¹.

As described by PCLC, many people experiencing homelessness in Frankston City are forced to use rooming houses as a medium-term alternative to unsheltered homelessness. This is likely to continue for the foreseeable future due to the long lead times before any increases in the supply of social housing or before improved access to private rental housing eventuates. In addition, rooming houses are used for emergency accommodation by a variety of providers including members of the specialist homelessness services system from outside the locality and as far away as the western region of Victoria, and there exists a body of evidence now describing their unsuitability for this purpose².

¹ Peninsula Community Legal Centre, submission to the Rooming House Lived-Experience Project (April 2022), p. 2 - 3

² North and West Homelessness 2019, Networks *Crisis in Crisis Report*

From a regulation perspective, there are multiple Victorian Acts, Regulations, Protocols, and a national Code that regulate the building, operation, and closure of rooming houses. They define what constitutes a rooming house and set out the responsibilities of owners or operators as well as the minimum standards to which they must adhere alongside the rights of residents and the consequences for operators if these are not met. The legislation governing rooming houses allocates responsibility for monitoring compliance with these regulations across two levels of Government; that is, the Victorian State Government through Consumer Affairs Victoria, and all Victorian local Government Councils or Shires. This means that multiple bodies with varying resources are responsible for registering and monitoring compliance with the many sets of regulation. The overlap in regulation and resulting diffusion of responsibility makes rooming houses a complex area to understand and compliance with regulations potentially difficult to monitor. Arguably it also makes it difficult to hold these entities accountable for any failures to undertake their roles appropriately.

Attendees at the roundtables discussed many of the issues that exist with the standard of rooming house dwellings and management, their licencing and the compliance of private sector operators who are primarily there to make money. Of additional concern was the stigmatization of tenants, especially by some segments of the media.

What to do?

The issues facing rooming house residents are not new. In addition to the work of the Rooming House Taskforce in 2009, there has been a recent comprehensive review of rooming house experiences by the Residential Tenancies Commission which is due to release its findings in 2023. As cited above, there have also been several recent submissions and reports into the experiences of people living in rooming houses and these included service providers. There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Their work is referenced in this document and their recommendations, along with the work of the roundtable participants, have been synthesised into the following recommendations which are offered to the Strategic Alliance for consideration and action.

Recommendation 15:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the establishment and resourcing of a State level Rooming House Advisory Council made up of representatives of all key stakeholders and local area Rooming House working groups also resourced by the State Government.

Recommendation 16:

The Strategic Alliance to convene a Frankston Rooming House working group, connected to the existing Melbourne Metropolitan Rooming House Group and the State level Rooming House Advisory Council when established. Its purpose will be to collate data, monitor activity and provide advice to the Alliance and the State level council. Their work will include

- Support greater connection between all IAP / Emergency housing providers and the state level Rooming House Advisory Council to ensure coordination of referrals, closures and support to people housed in rooming houses.
- Support for the planning and coordination of the closure of problematic rooming.
- Participation in work to update minimum standards and update fit and proper test for operators.
- The development of more accessible information developed for all residents of rooming houses, led by the State level Rooming House Advisory Council
- Investigate and pilot a rating system for private rooming house providers, led by the State level Rooming House Advisory Council

Recommendation 17:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for Frankston Council to adequately resource its prescribed regulatory responsibilities with respect to Rooming Houses and provide regular reporting to the Frankston Rooming House working group on its activities, actions, and outcomes.

Recommendation 18:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Rooming House Outreach Program (RHOP), which must receive adequate funding to ensure improved coverage and enforcement of regulation.

Recommendation 19:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for Consumer Affairs Victoria to conduct consultations with local councils and community organisations working in the sector to identify rooming houses that are in breach of the legislation and develop a compliance strategy and take enforcement action against rooming house operators who are not compliant

Recommendation 20:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the current funding model of the Housing Options workers role, in particular the online accommodation directory which could be made accessible to all homelessness entry points.

4. Crisis and Emergency Accommodation in Frankston

As described earlier, there is a crisis in private rental housing with vacancy rates at historic lows and rents at near-historic highs and a significant shortfall in social housing in Victoria and the Frankston district.

What do people do when they have nowhere to go?

When we think about people experiencing homelessness, we know that rough sleeping is only the tip of a much larger problem with many people living in other homeless circumstances such as rooming houses, supported accommodation, temporary lodgings, couch surfing or crowding. In the 2016 census rough sleeping made up only 14% of all people counted as homeless in the Frankston area. The data from the Frankton Zero project tells us that while 155 people have been added to the list sleeping rough since July 2021 the monthly active number hovers around 60 people with around half that number sleeping rough at any one time. This means that over 400 people are probably homeless in and around the area at any one time.

We know that homelessness is damaging and that the experience itself makes it harder for people to exit. Because there is nowhere else for people to go and because we seek to avoid this harm, we need to provide them with well-regulated, high quality, affordable, crisis and emergency accommodation while they resolve their homelessness and secure long-term housing.

The Specialist Homelessness Service System provides just over 400 beds in government funded purpose-built crisis accommodation facilities across the whole of Victoria, with several youth and family violence refuges in Frankston. However, the closest generalist purpose-built crisis accommodation is in Dandenong (Launch Housing Bob's Place).

These funded crisis accommodations offer time-limited affordable accommodation and support, but the demand overwhelms supply and entry is severely triaged. Further assistance is provided by purchased private emergency accommodation in hotels, motels, and caravan parks using the Housing Establishment Funding (HEF). However, these options are very expensive per night, time-limited and usually only available once or twice every year, with the exception of the recent COVID 19 pandemic. Furthermore, prior to COVID the supply of these types of emergency accommodation options was dwindling fast and in some areas such as the north and west of Metropolitan Melbourne only 1 or 2 remained that were open to accepting clients from the specialist homelessness service system. The inadequacies of the current system have led to a variety of local solutions, including in Frankston (the ['Winter Shelter'](#) model), Rosebud ([supported camping on the foreshore](#)), and in the CBD (the [Make Room](#) project), and initiatives such as the [Sleepbus](#).

Emergency accommodation presents a dilemma between harm minimization and opportunity cost that has resulted in a form of policy inertia, with no new government funded purpose-built crisis accommodation facilities built in recent years and millions spent on private emergency accommodation – hotels, motels, backpackers and caravan parks.

Harm Minimisation: The specialist response to homelessness has an ethical responsibility to minimise the harm to those sleeping rough on our streets

Opportunity cost: Every dollar spent on crisis accommodation is a \$ not spent on more 'permanent' housing solutions such as public housing, community housing, support to maintain or access private rental housing or even commonwealth rent assistance (if better targeted to people at risk of homelessness)

The dilemma is difficult to resolve. Should we advocate for more crisis accommodation or keep spending money on privately provided emergency accommodation? Is there a place for night shelters? Should we provide this type of accommodation? If so, under what conditions.

For example,

1. Should we provide or develop a position to support night by night emergency shelter options?
2. What are the minimum preconditions if such shelters are provided?

The roundtable raised these issues but did not form a view which is for the Strategic Alliance to arrive at. Bearing this in mind, the following recommendations are made to the Strategic Alliance for consideration and action.

Recommendation 21:

The Strategic Alliance to lead work to develop and distribute educative materials aimed at countering stigma and reinforcing messaging around the harm of homelessness, including the framing of homelessness in the language of natural disasters.

Recommendation 22:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate for the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing to review the Housing Establishment Fund (HEF) expended in the area and ascertain how much is being spent and where, and whether it is sufficient to meet the current and likely future (2023-2025) needs of the catchment.

Recommendation 23:

The Strategic Alliance to advocate to the Victorian Government and Department of Families, Fairness and Housing for the construction of government funded purpose-built crisis accommodations. These should focus on 'at-risk' cohorts including youth, families escaping family violence, older people, and singles with design linked to data on need and purpose, and designs and construction which enables the transition of these sites to long-term affordable or social housing when appropriate (i.e., when the demand for shelter falls)

Recommendation 24:

The Strategic Alliance to convene a project reference group made up of members with appropriate expertise. The reference group will be responsible for developing a business case exploring a range of alternative emergency accommodation models for Frankston. Models need to include a set of standards for what is acceptable and not acceptable in any form of homelessness shelter with respect to amenity and safety, alongside a basic level of support to link people into more long-term options and draw upon existing community goodwill

5. Capacity Building

There is a need to increase resources, capabilities, and coordination across all partners of the Frankston Housing and Homelessness Strategic Alliance.

The following recommendations are made to the Strategic Alliance for consideration and action.

Recommendations

Participation

Recommendation 25:

The Strategic Alliance recognizes that there are community members (Seaford Housing Action Collective is one example) who seek a greater voice and inclusion in the work of the Strategic Alliance and will support this wherever possible.

Capability and strategy

Recommendation 26:

The Strategic Alliance should invest in improved data and analytics capabilities across multiple data sources: population and demography, social housing, private housing, legal centers, homelessness and family violence services, universities, and business developments, including combining resources and information across Alliance partners

Recommendation 27:

The Strategic Alliance should develop and undertake a strategic research agenda focused on locally important issues, requirements, and their impacts upon the supply of and access to needed housing and accommodation types. This includes developing the capability to swiftly assess the appropriateness of emerging innovative ideas (e.g., Homelessness Bus or Winter Shelters).

Frankston City Council

Recommendation 28:

The Strategic Alliance advocate that Frankston Council build agreed ideas and strategic directions into its new Housing Strategy 2023 and the associated Affordable Housing Policy, Safer Community Policy and Strategy and Planning scheme

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Notes from the Private Rental Housing in Frankston roundtable

1. Ideas to increase the supply of affordable private rental housing

<p>Support Build to Rent models: housing that is purpose built for the rental market and developed and operated by corporate entities rather than small investors. Usually offer greater security of tenure but unlikely to be a solution for affordable housing unless combined with government or philanthropically funded subsidies. Could be attractive for superannuation funds and other institutional investors and focus on the key worker market.</p>
<p>Socially minded property owners: Programs exist which target socially minded property owners and support them to make their properties available to people experiencing homelessness at market rent discounts. An example is HomeGround Real Estate and its several tiers of subsidy for tenants.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. We protect value of your asset 2. Guaranteed returns in turbulent times and long-term tenancy agreements 3. Tax incentive 4. Social benefit <p>Another example is Property initiatives Real Estate (Women's Property Initiatives). Here 100% of profits are channeled into providing safe, permanent housing for women and children facing homelessness (without a specific focus on Frankston)</p>
<p>Incentivize affordable private rental at the local level: But what incentivizes affordable Private Rental? Ideas proposed include,</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Council could refuse sub-divisions that did not increase the supply of affordable housing 2. Council could identify what would incentivize 'build to rent' developments 3. Council could support land consolidation if it supports an increase in the supply of affordable housing, for example by being of interest to institutional investors 4. Could council partner with community housing associations to attract developers and financiers in pursuit of the goal of increasing in the supply of affordable housing 5. Council could investigate if certain housing types are more likely to become affordable and support those 6. How could planning process be more efficient without losing key community safeguards (Consultation, environment, etc.)
<p>Support land trust models: these could be used to fund or seed fund affordable housing models or conduct initial work to get projects off the ground; could also be a community managed not-for-profit model of a community land trust</p>
<p>Regulate short-term private rentals more heavily to return rental stock to long-term rental market: there could be heavier restrictions, regulation, enforcement and taking of legal action which incentivizes longer term models, with other municipalities (e.g. Byron Shire) providing models</p>
<p>Introduce rent controls: Advocate for mechanisms to control rent increases providing security and potentially disincentivizes some investors from entering the market for housing opening those up for purchase or for socially minded investment. Mechanisms could be time-limited.</p>
<p>Rate relief: can the levying of rates be linked to incentives to provide affordable housing?</p>
<p>Tenant matching: Making use of under-utilized land and connecting people such as older people with relocatable dwellings – Peninsula Community Housing are trying this. However, this is an area of some complexity and requires research and a review of existing work, for example Green and McCarthy (2015)</p>

2. Ideas to better support people in crisis living in private rental housing

<p>Managing transitions: Important learning is the need to 'manage' support transitions to sustainable rentals when there is a change in circumstances</p> <p>Programs exist which can help to mitigate crisis, prevent evictions and manage transitions but they are under-funded and under-resourced and connect to issues with the supply of affordable private rental, social housing and safe, appropriate and affordable interim accommodation.</p>
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Identifying 'at-risk' tenancies is tricky – can target 'first to know' agencies such as Centrelink (evaluated by Planigale and Stebbins 2013), and research includes Batterham (2019, 2021) and Ghasri et al (2022)

Better identification of risk and information about what exists to support people:

- We could collect data on people who receive Notices to Vacate to better understand why people are losing their tenancies to ensure the tenancies are sustainable, and better understand and promote the pathways for people in private rental who are faced with eviction. There is a need to simplify the process for people experiencing this. A good program to use as the benchmark is Home Connect
- Advocate for a resource to collect and collate data from the service system and connect this to data on numbers at-risk and estimations of demand
- Better connection to 'first to know' agencies, such as Centrelink to identify people 'at-risk' of homelessness and allow for earlier interventions and transition support if needed. The 360-degree pilot service offer (Planigale and Stebbins 2013) was a partnership between Centrelink and local homelessness sentry point with its range of social and financial supports including Private Rental Access Programs and is an example of how this could work
- Education and support to key workers in important locations such as libraries or community Centres
- Housing support guides
- Council website

PRAP (Private Rental Assistance Program): can help to prevent evictions but the issues are resources, PRAP Plus also exists but there are only 2 FTE from Port Phillip to Mornington. They provide system support and support to tenancies in crisis. The PRAP Stream 3 model also exists to provide a short-term subsidy of up to three months for people in an existing but at-risk private tenancy

Home Connect: works with people at risk of homelessness by providing support to stabilise existing housing or to find more appropriate housing. The program also supports clients with issues such as chronic ill health, mental illness, education and employment options, wellbeing and living skills. Example is the VincentCare [Home Connect](#) program at their Glenroy Hub.

Young Renters program: works with young people experiencing homelessness or at-risk tenancies to remove barriers with case management support and flexible brokerage packages. The [Young Adults Private Rental Brokerage Program](#) is also run by VincentCare at their Glenroy Hub.

Information sharing and closer cooperation between providers: Examples include Private Access / Assistance Worker Networks, Functional Zero service coordination models (though in this case a much larger BNL is likely), structured connection, but these need more resources to manage / facilitate as a bigger group of people

Barriers to this are Victorian jurisdictional issues between Consumer affairs Victoria (DJCS) who are in charge of Residential Tenancies and the Housing portfolio which oversees housing and homelessness (DFFH)

VCAT: could be more involved in sustaining housing, with good success with payment plans and targeted to people able to sustain housing

Community legal Centres play a key role and close cooperation already exists between VCAT, CLC's and PRAP

3. Improve access to private rental housing

Education of Real Estate Agents: This has been tried and the issue is much more about property owners. Commercial pressures make it very hard to do as the owners are the ones making the decisions in most cases about who gets access.

PRAP (Private Rental Assistance Program): As with responding to crisis, the PRAP can help people with difficulties access private rental. This includes facilitated rental searches, support to inspect, complete applications and advocate with gatekeepers such as owners or agents. Additional support includes rent in advance as an incentive to owners or agents, facilitated access to bond and advice.

Rent Assistance: The Australian Government should review Commonwealth Rent Assistance as a priority. There is a strong case for changes to improve its adequacy and targeting. However, would an increase in the amount of Commonwealth Rent Assistance either across the board or relative to local rent costs make any difference or would the market adjust and increase its costs?

Reforms of Residential Tenancy Legislation: aim to prevent exclusionary practices

Support advocacy for changes to tax settings

There is research which supports the argument that tax settings make a big difference to decision made by the household sector which dominates the private rental sector through small-holding investment and landlordism (Martin et al 2022). Changes to these may impact the sector much more consequentially than any of the changes described above, in particular if they disincentivize the small-holding nature of PRS landlords and incentivize investment by large corporate or build to rent landlords who can be further incentivized to fill needed gaps in the private rental market

4. Ideas for specific cohorts in private rental housing

Targeting key cohorts: When proposing any new developments including socially minded property owners or inclusionary zoning, focus on cohorts such as key workers, older women, people experiencing homelessness, people escaping family violence, young people, First Nations, and seek the support of advocates for these groups. See **tenant matching and under-utilized land idea**.

People with high or multiple and complex needs: almost always excluded due to fear from owners or agents that they will damage the asset or lead to too much work in managing the tenancy.

The free market acts against high needs individuals (which is many people on the BNL) and these people are unlikely to be in private rental. These people are also very unlikely to be able to access private rental which isn't connected to social housing in some way (e.g. Specialist Disability Housing head leased from private provider).

Support can help to give comfort to private owners but in a choice between an easy and a 'challenging' tenant, in a free market, it is unlikely to be enough. Socially minded property owners and agents need to be allies for this to work. We need to be better at explaining who is becoming homeless or is in danger and connecting them to sympathetic property owners and property managers who enter with eyes wide open and specific outcomes in mind that are not only related to capital appreciation or rental income.

Appendix 2: Notes from the Social Housing in Frankston roundtable

1. The challenges, issues and problems identified

Land: Where is the well situated, available land? Who owns the available land (Council, VicRoads, State Government, Federal Government)?
New social housing: what is coming to Frankston via the Big Build? Build housing based on identified and projected need, given recent analyses in Frankston and Port Phillip this would suggest greater need for permanent supportive housing (of various types) and a system of housing linked to national targets which flow into municipal targets for various forms of social and supported housing and tenants' mixes.
Housing supply in general: State and Territory Governments should commit to firm targets for new housing supply, facilitated by planning reforms and better co-ordination of infrastructure.
Government Expenditure: The \$16 billion governments spend each year on direct housing assistance could achieve more if it was better targeted to people in greatest need. The nearly \$3 billion given to first home buyers works against improving affordability. This money would be better spent preventing homelessness.
Housing Assistance Model: Social housing is an important part of the affordable housing solution, but it has a number of shortcomings. Governments should trial a housing assistance model that provides equivalent assistance to people in need regardless of whether they live in public, community or privately-owned housing.
Funding mix for social housing is incomplete: In any social housing development, capital funding is provided, however there is rarely if ever money for support, with maintenance a major issue in housing high and complex needs tenants. See 'Supporting people to live in social housing' and improving access for 'people with high or multiple and complex needs' in private rental housing
Do we know the actual demand? Does the current VHR wait list reflect 'actual' demand? Are people who would be eligible no longer applying because of wait times. How many people give up due to long wait lists and what is the actual level of 'latent demand'?
Community support: is there enough community support to build more social housing?
Community Rooming Housing transfer loophole: the high position of transfers in the prioritization hierarchy of the VHR wait list (Number 2 below Emergency Management) means that there is an incentive for people to take up CRH offers, giving up their place on the VHR and then put in a transfer application
Building social housing: Lead times for housing development are long
Funding gap: There is a gap with affordable (75% of income) housing
The siloed nature of funding sources: There are many potential funding sources, but they are also silos which do not come together well
Data gaps: Transparency of social housing allocations via the VHR is missing, data can be opaque and is not timely
Market based structure of community housing model can be a barrier to cooperation: 'Commercial in confidence' remains an issue for social housing development and bringing partners together in new models.
Cohort gaps: Gap for women over 55 (Viv's place can help fill some but we need more)
NDIS: there is disability housing available (Supported Independent Living (SIL) and Supported Disability Accommodation (SDA), but requires NDIS assessments to include the need for this type of housing and the barriers to these are considerable

2. Ideas for building new social housing

Ideas to do with land <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Audit of all Government owned land (including entities such as VicRoads) 2. Community land trust could be established by Frankston council 3. Re-purpose council owned buildings and land for developments. homelessness. Some local governments have land assets that they can sell, lease or gift, or other community assets 4. Overton road: there is land here, why is that not being utilized?
Planning: Local governments have an important role in land use planning and residential development approvals. This includes the administration of the development assessment process (i.e. approval or refusal of a planning application) and land release and supply. E.g. use of developer contributions targeting

developments that benefit people on very low and low-incomes; inclusionary zoning which will help increase affordable housing
<p>Community support: Build a coalition of support for social housing. Community education to build support for social housing, increased support and for safe, affordable crisis and medium-term accommodation. Start from a narrative of need and the consequence of doing nothing or continuing on the same path, with Frankston Zero a way to do that.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tackle stigma • Re-position homelessness as a 'disaster' • Stronger messaging around harm
Capacity building social housing sector: CHIA Vic can play a greater role in developing template models to bring together finance, support, housing, and development for councils
Inclusionary zoning: Setting aside a proportion of any new development as affordable housing (75% of market rent) usually managed by social landlords could help to increase the supply. This needs the support of the state and federal Governments for subsidies and local Government support for planning and advocacy. Set targets in council plans and connect these to council planning schemes
Developer Social Housing Levy: Depending on the rate of the levy and the type and amount of new building it is imposed upon, this has the potential to raise funds necessary for social housing development annually, at 1.75% it was proposed that it would raise around \$800 million per annum. The Feb 2022 State Government proposal was withdrawn following pressure from the Property Council (among others), but it remains an option for a pipeline of funding independent from Federal Government funding. A grant scheme could be established to distribute these developer contributions allowing for greater transparency and community input.
Public – Private partnerships: Encourage philanthropy and private development in some social housing developments (e.g., institutional investors such as superannuation funds)
Community rooming housing is a model that requires support on-site or for support to be easily accessible to be viable due to the 'residualisation' of tenants (high and complex needs, housing of last resort) and the tensions caused by shared facilities. However, it also offers a qualitatively better experience for tenants than private rooming houses and (currently) has a transfer loophole into other forms of social housing
Interesting models: Launch Housing Harris Transportable, 48 prefabricated dwellings across 7 sites on VicRoads land for peppercorn rent
Interesting models: Launch Housing Bellfield – Banyule council put up land on 50-year peppercorn lease, and money was sourced from Big Build
Interesting models: WPI shared equity in Cardinia – tenant equity model
Interesting models: combining several models/ideas under-utilized land with Kids under Cover demountables and tenancy matching to provide relocatable dwellings for specific cohorts
Interesting models: Demountables funded by Homes Victoria on spare land
Interesting organisation: Habitat for Humanity – connects local people to community housing groups or models

3. Ideas to improve access to existing and new social housing

Greater transparency of the allocations of housing from VHR: how many offer are made each quarter and to whom off the list? Who gets access and who misses out? Is this the most equitable distribution and does it meet community expectations and needs?
<p>Review of VHR prioritization and allocation process: Existing process of housing allocation in Victoria leaves practitioners with little or no power to influence allocation decisions. The list is segmented into 7 categories and allocations are made in each region linking available properties to appropriate person based on the list hierarchy. The hierarchy is:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Emergency Management Housing 2. Priority Transfer 3. Homeless with support 4. Supported Housing 5. Special Housing needs: Insecure, unsafe, inappropriate, urgent medical 6. Special Housing needs: Over 55 7. Register of interest

Idea: Reserve a percentage of housing for people on the BNL (Homeless with support) and for each of the priority categories so that one category no longer dominates
Choice Based Letting system of social housing allocation: If people on the VHR have greater choice in their 'forever' homes there is a greater likelihood of retention, particularly if the dwelling is more appropriate to needs and connection to the community and the opportunities that come with this are facilitated (Levin et al 2023, Pawson and Hulse 2011)
Increase promotion of Cooperative housing (e.g., CEHL): This option is not well known to many applicants for social housing. There is stock here and there are vacancies.
Improved matching of tenants and properties would decrease need for transfers from CRH's into other forms of social housing, but may already be as efficient as it could be
Education and training in a stable setting as a pathway out of poverty and preventing future homelessness: There is a significant gap when it comes to youth specific housing and a clear need for both a youth-focused, supported crisis accommodation and a Youth Foyer in the Frankston Area. With a high-quality TAFE / University in the area a Foyer is a logical next step.
People with high or multiple and complex needs are almost always excluded due to fear from property managers that they will damage the asset or lead to too much work in managing the tenancy. See 'Community Housing Funding Model'
Improvements to vacant untenable properties would mean less time homeless but require additional resourcing

4. Supporting people to live in social housing

Community housing funding model: Must change funding model for social housing if it is to continue to be the place where people with high needs are housed, which means more money or improved models of maintenance, and better connections to support to sustain tenancies.
Fund support models which exist to meet high needs groups: These are based on a continuum of 'flex-in / flex-out' support. Models include the Sacred Heart mission Journey to Social Inclusion (J2SI) and partnership with Housing First in Port Phillip and the Star Health High Rise Housing Support Program also in Port Phillip
Existing programs like Frankston Zero can help quantify housing and support needs: see 'Frankston zero housing needs analysis'
NDIS: Better connections to NDIS assessments to access SDA and SIL (disability) supported housing

Appendix 3: Notes from the Rooming Houses in Frankston roundtable

1. Regulation of rooming houses

<p>Regulation of Victorian Rooming Houses</p> <p>There are several Victorian Acts, Regulations, Protocols and even National Codes that regulate the building, operation and closure of rooming houses. They define a rooming house and set out the responsibilities of owners or operators, the standards to which they must adhere, the rights of residents, and the consequences if they are not met. They also allocate responsibility for monitoring compliance across two levels of Government (State through Consumer Affairs Victoria and local Government, i.e. multiple bodies with varying resources) making it complex to report breaches. This overlap in regulation and diffusion of responsibility makes rooming houses a complex area to understand and monitor. The feeling is that these two entities also lack the resources required to do the work effectively.</p>
<p>Failure to register</p> <p>Failure to register as a rooming house operator is an offence under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act of 2008, enforced by local Government and there is an obligation under the RTA for the owners of a building or their agent to notify the local council if a building is either being used as a rooming house or is not registered as such. Consumer Affairs Victoria are then responsible for compliance monitoring inspection and further action including the freezing of assets, disciplinary action, civil proceedings, and criminal prosecution</p>
<p>Rooming House Closure protocol: a template exists provided by DFFH and examples from inner city councils but there does not appear to be one in use in Frankston</p>
<p>Regulation and questions</p> <p>Are the existing regulations adequate?</p> <p>Are they well-coordinated?</p> <p>Are they able to be monitored and compliance assured?</p> <p>Issues</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Need more action on unlicensed rooming house operators 2. Multiple overlapping acts, standards and regulations make it complex to report breaches. For example, councils are in charge of registration, but licensing is done by CAV and both bodies can carry out inspections. Goal would be to seek consolidation of regulation and enforcement in one body under one level of Government with sufficient resources to achieve quality objectives 3. Overlapping acts lead to a lack of uniformity. For example, under the planning act need more than 10 rooms for approval, yet rooming houses are defined under the RTA as 4 rooms or more 4. Overlapping acts and regulations need to be coordinated. For example, The Building and Residential Tenancies Act need to coordinate to support innovative models, e.g. Home Share. For example, councils are in charge of registration, but licensing is done by CAV and is there coordination between these two bodies 5. Existing laws and regulations are not always met. For example, building regulations and public health laws, unregistered operators 6. The rooming house standards are minimal or poorly written: Goals would be to advocate for improvements to standards but what would we ask for?
<p>Behavior of operators: There are many examples of exploitation and unauthorized charges, frequently described as support by rooming house operators. For example, rules around Centrepay and the charging of fees fall between the cracks of federal and state jurisdictions. Improved support to residents to report this behavior without endangering their accommodation are required.</p>

2. Compliance by operators of rooming houses

<p>Monitoring remains an issue #1: Consumer Affairs Victoria but monitoring remains an issue: Councils have entry powers under public health and wellbeing and building regulations and Consumer Affairs Victoria is responsible for the enforcement of the residency provisions of the RTA and also has entry powers, but attendees to the roundtable feel there is a lack resources (staff) to do what can be confronting and difficult work for both these entities as well as it needs to be done to ensure safe and quite enjoyment for residents.</p>
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Monitoring remains an issue #2: Lack of power for compliance for CAV and councils especially when issues appear to be addressed or do not seem to be addressed over many months, or is it that the existing powers are not being utilized as effectively as they could be? Are there issues with VCAT?
The cost of enforcement: staff, impact of closures on residents and wider community
Bureaucratic nature of councils may lead to slow responses. Timeliness KPI's for responses could work if resourced but complexity of resolution still leads to delays
Data Gaps #1: Data collection and collation: is it as good as it should be, for example unregistered rooming houses, poor operators, conditions
Data gaps #2: Sometimes it is hard to know what is going on and residents need to be empowered to give information to Councils and CAV, that means education and support to tenants is needed. Information is not always easy as it relies on tenant feedback who may feel under pressure to be a 'good tenant' and are frequently highly vulnerable. Process of complaint making is not streamlined but complex. Investigate processes which support vulnerable tenants finding their voice and feeling safe
The operators themselves: What incentivizes people to be PRH operators? Intentionality matters: not people who are in it for a quick buck, but people who are interested in doing the right thing
Different strategies based on triangle of compliance <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Criminals: identify and 'dissuade' from operation – how do we know who these people are? How best to dissuade them from operation? 2. Opportunists: identify and 'dissuade' from operation if unwilling to do the right thing 3. All others: support to do the right thing
Potential long-term strategy based on triangle of compliance Disincentives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bust the financial model for criminal and opportunists <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Regulation such that if you are operating a rooming house, you must meet such a high standard that not a single rogue or criminal can own or operate one: b) licensing to restrict entry only to Not-For-Profit (NFP) providers, and c) fines so great that others get out ASAP Incentives <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. To community housing associations and providers and legitimate NFPs to provide this housing and manage the maintenance and support requirements Innovation <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Step down models provided the highest incentives 4. Collegiate housing (self-contained TBK) for singles and couples and common area 5. Mobile housing villages (grey nomads and people who want to live in vehicles) 6. Dry accommodations as well as wet 7. Pet friendly across the board

3. Supporting people to live in rooming houses

SHS agencies do not attend rooming houses unless supporting and existing client: there are over 800 rooming houses in the southeast (78 in Frankston alone) and that means not there are not enough workers
SHS agencies: these agencies do referrals but cannot do follow up and there are also referrals into local rooming houses from out of area (e.g. from the west or directly out of prisons)
Education for tenants: Handbooks exist and PCLC does outreach into rooming houses in Frankston and across the southeast region, they also take community workers into these places. There is not enough information for potential residents about what they are getting themselves in for
Consequence: Many residents feel isolated and unsupported in rooming houses and are unaware of their rights
High and complex needs: People with high and complex needs almost always end up in rooming houses, these include co-occurring mental illness, alcohol and other drug misuse and addiction, disability, older people, migrants and asylum seekers, and people exiting institutional setting especially jail.

4. Other ideas for thinking about the issue of rooming houses

Improving standards: what incentives have worked to improve standards or compliance. Some good examples from overseas but the feeling is that incentives usually only work for people already doing good things.
Connecting better and combining resources: There is a peak group for rooming houses in Melbourne, the Melbourne Metropolitan Rooming House Working Group (MMRWG), and the SHSN is part of this group and the REAV are on this group and it is trying to improve the standards. Idea: Rooming house working group to bring together the data and issues, bear witness and connect to MRHWG
Collegiate housing: there is a need for collegiate housing which is similar to rooming houses, with rooms for singles and couples and some family units. All self-contained (Toilet, bath, kitchen), plus with space for communal dining and kitchen areas
Idea: who would give dwellings to community operators to run, can we incentivize existing operators who want to do the right thing to hand over operation to not-for-profits and help them to do the right thing, what about room share?
Room share idea: perhaps administered by a community provider with private owners providing rooms
Ideal models and tenant matching: ideal models of congregate type housing do exist, e.g. Servants, could they be used in an appeal to philanthropy? Can we develop a matching system of residents to the ideal model for them?
Stigmatization of tenants: Especially the Murdoch Press as exemplified by the Herald Sun . There is a narrative that needs to be challenged and changed.

Appendix 4: Notes from the crisis and emergency accommodation in Frankston roundtable

1. Using hotels, motels, and caravan parks for emergency accommodation (EA)

Caravan parks seen as a valuable community resource and Seaford Caravan Park as a very interesting local service to replicate, however Frankston City Council (FCC) contract commits it to closing, this could/should be rescinded according to Seaford Housing Action Collective (SHAC) – how about a Not-for-profit caravan park or a cabin park built on Government or Council land?
Rooming houses: private rooming houses are still being used as emergency accommodation – how about a Not-for-profit community managed rooming house if there is no other option?
Safety: there is an urgent need to keep people safe while experiencing homelessness, especially the most vulnerable and at-risk people, and this extends to their experience of emergency accommodation, but can it be done in private settings?

2. The use of Housing Establishment Funds (HEF) for EA

Review HEF: The amount of HEF has not kept pace with demand in Frankston: advocate for a review of HEF with DFFH and the first question is how much has / is being spent and where?
Develop an alternative to current HEF expenditure: current private models are not fit for purpose, we need to develop a path to transition to a safer, more sustainable model
Increase HEF: There is a need for more funding to provide safer accommodation for people sleeping rough, but the accommodation must be safer, with more flexibility for single clients and to pay for options to remove barriers
Better relationships with private providers: Broker better support within existing funded services to support private providers of hotels and motels so that they do not ‘ban’ referrals from homelessness services
Make it cheaper: Make arrangements for longer-term (and cheaper) weekly rates
Extended emergency accommodation: There is support for extended EA as a baseline response until appropriate housing and support is available BUT the cost is prohibitive and the number of providers is limited, as are the number of supports required to keep people safe and providers happy
Rooming houses: private rooming houses are not fit for HEF referrals, but it still happens because there are no other options, these support these providers to exist. Referrals often come from out of area as well.
Backpackers: could we create / develop a backpackers’ facility on council or state land?

3. Crisis Supported accommodation

Supported crisis accommodation: Given the need to keep people safe while homeless and the current inability of most private providers to do so, there is agreement for the need for supported crisis accommodation in Frankston, with existing models such as Bob’s place, Southbank and Ozanam House cited. We must advocate hard for this and there was significant support for this in the roundtable. If combined with long-term social housing and built in such a way that it could be converted to long-term social housing than the main criticism can be addressed
Social housing model of crisis accommodation using a cabin park model and incorporating a neighborhood village and tiny housing. Land to come from either: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Community land trust or cooperative 2. Public / private partnership 3. Private owner This would provide low-cost accommodation, shared community facilities, and management on-site for safety
Community managed: Investigate, propose, and build new community managed crisis accommodation and rooming house models, made affordable with support (safety) on-site. These could be facilitated by councils collaborating with the building industry.
Key factors:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Capital costs: to develop and establish the dwellings 2. Property management: tenancy management and dwelling upkeep 3. Support costs: on-site tenancy and personal support
Dual diagnosis: There remains a need for specialist dual diagnosis accommodation, probably linked to detox and rehabilitation facilities which are also lacking.

4. Alternative models of shelters, pop-ups and forms of temporary shelters

<p>Winter shelter #1: disgraceful that people have nowhere to sleep; heartbreaking to see their plight and their bravery.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There remain obstacles with building regulations that council could help with • Attracts broad support from the community including volunteers and donations • Gives hope to people that they are not alone • Should be year-round
<p>Winter shelter #2: cited as great idea</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Love the winter shelter. As a crisis centre it was awesome to have an immediate action for clients'. • 'Saved people from sleeping rough, a very valuable community response.' • Want winter and summer shelters • But need to consider complex clients who were unable to access the winter shelter • Council needs to be more flexible on this model • Agreed use of unused buildings as shelters, could unused municipal buildings be used as winter shelters, e.g., Frankston Yacht Club • Designated car park for overnight use <p>Some felt we need more safe and secure shelters with 1 – 5 nights' accommodation</p>
<p>There is support for pop ups and other temporary models (like the winter shelter) to be investigated as short-term / medium-term options to increase the supply of crisis beds. In doing so will need to explore partnerships with council, state, philanthropy and community sector</p> <p>Suggestion: talk to owners of old motels (e.g., the Ranch) to investigate potential for pop up's, nominate a 'broker' to do this work and facilitate it, look to sites in places like Mount Eliza (possibly the business college or garden centre/)</p> <p>Suggestion: Government under-write risks for registered housing agencies to run pop ups</p>
<p>Summary: These shelters need to be year-round and if we do that why not a purpose built and staffed, supported crisis accommodation? Why keep putting it on the community to come up with solutions when the Government could provide the funding to support models we know could work. A low barrier, supported night shelter with social housing also on site</p>
<p>Safe / Gated car park / space for mobile homes – Mobile housing villages: for people who want to stay in cars and/or grey nomads or travelers – mix of dry and wet areas, always pet friendly – BUT: danger of encampments and potential other costs. Needs a review of issues, needs support and security and should it only be for one night at a time. Port Macquarie model: political backlash, needs to have support built</p>
<p>Sleep bus proposed by one person: \$100K to build</p>
<p>Tiny houses in backyards</p>
<p>Appeal to socially conscious Air BnB owners: e.g., Alpine Shire Council and Byron Shire have done some work to encourage property owners to move their home from short term rental to long term rental.</p>

5. Other innovative ideas

<p>Make use of air space above car parks and railway stations with combined crisis accommodation and long-term housing: Multi story buildings over key railway stations with car parks below – combination of emergency accommodation, long-term supported housing and parking</p>
<p>Storage: Storage for the belongings of people sleeping rough, community lockable cupboards for people experiencing homelessness to prevent loss of belongings. Partnership with storage companies to set aside a proportion of their spaces for people in different stages: first experience of homelessness, rough sleeping to prevent loss of belongings – provide support to minimize hoarding</p>
<p>Camp sites on beaches: Rosebud is an example of what some councils are doing</p>

Drop-in centre: food, shower, employment
Community involvement: Open the discussion to the community – SHAC is an example of community voices who are not being included
Transitional Housing: review
Safety: Must have a focus on safety – if people would rather sleep rough than be in emergency housing, then something is wrong
More housing outreach workers on the ground
Phone number for public feedback
Establish a furniture bank
Build more student housing (if students are competing in the private rental market, then this makes sense)
Social housing would fix so much
Shower project at local pools?

6. Cohort – Young people

Safety: How do we keep young people safe in accommodation that is not youth-specific?
Youth specific crisis accommodation needed for high-risk youth or youth entrenched in justice system: Youth2 partners are ready to support a youth crisis accommodation but need to find a suitable site. The council car park in Fletcher Road has been suggested.
Funding reallocation: there is a proposal to reallocate funding across multiple agencies to support the operational costs of youth housing programs with home share program proposed
Models proposed: Home share <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better support of HANZA • Matching of home share • Forum for home share platforms • Academic research re app success / merits • Fund connection events for potential people to meet and form new share households (i.e. not an agency organized supporting / matching program) • Culture change in community
Models proposed: Night stop program pilot
Kids under cover: fund 100 kids under cover units – cost \$2.2 million

7. Cohort – First Nations

Culturally safe #1: Aboriginal specific innovative models where cultural needs are addressed, and cultural safety is provided
Culturally safe #2: A new approach to supporting Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander housing and homelessness services

8. Cohort – Family Violence

Not much was proposed however the input of FV specialists was put forward to discuss safety aspects and need – this cohort was not a primary focus of the roundtables
Bob's Place: extend this existing crisis accommodation to allow refuge beds
Temporary houses: access to 'temporary' stand-alone houses for families in crisis
Men's refuge was proposed to be established
Head Leases: More head leases of houses to support homeless families

Appendix 5: Background and Attendance

The overall goal of the forum and accompanying roundtables held during October and November 2022 was to share information about Frankston Zero and lay the groundwork to secure a pipeline of the right housing and accommodation to match the current and emerging needs of the population of the Frankston area for the next 20 years.

Forum outcomes

1. To increase attendees' knowledge of the vision and purpose of Frankston Zero; including why the initiative exists, the aims and achievements of the initiative and the support required from various agencies to ensure the initiative achieves its primary goal of a functional zero end to rough sleeping homelessness.
2. Using current evidence, including lived experience, to develop a shared understanding of the current and emerging trends and needs relating to housing and accommodation across the Frankston City municipality while highlighting the barriers and challenges the community experience.
3. To secure a commitment from attendees to participate in the roundtable event most relevant to their organisation.

Roundtable Outcomes

1. Develop the short-term advocacy asks: What do we need now and over the next 5 years to ease the impact of the housing crisis in Frankston?
2. Facilitate any potential housing developments to get started.
3. Develop the mid and long-term strategic aims and objectives (6 to 20 years) as inputs into a variety of strategies and policy documents

Attendance

Forum – October 6, 2022: 53 attendees	Private Rental Housing Roundtable – October 13: 10 attendees Facilitator: Mark O'Brien (Residential Tenancies Commission)
	Crisis and Emergency Accommodation Housing Roundtable – October 17: 18 attendees Facilitator: Ruth Gordon (Southern Homelessness Networker)
	Rooming House Roundtable – October 18: 15 attendees Facilitator: Mark O'Brien
	Social Housing Roundtable – November 4: 12 attendees Facilitator: Stephanie Ng (Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria)

There was a high overlap between roundtable and forum attendees, with many people attending more than one session. We estimate 70 – 80 total distinct individuals attended all 5 sessions.

Appendix 6: CHIA Vic Affordable Housing Resources

[Community Housing Industry Association of Victoria](#) (CHIA Vic) have developed several resources to support the growth of Affordable Housing, many in partnership with the MAV. In addition to supporting engagement with stakeholders, both within council (e.g. Councillors, statutory planners) and external to council (e.g. residents), several can help council staff understand concepts in more detail to inform decision making. The resources include:

- [Understanding Affordable Housing and Section 173 Agreements](#) (2019 CHIA Vic/MAV project)
- [Options for delivering and securing affordable housing on council land and through the planning system](#) (2021 CHIA Vic/MAV project)
- [Building support for community housing](#) – written and video resources
- Other resources (council personnel FAQ, CHIA Vic member profiles and lease templates): Please email Stephanie Ng if you would like a copy of this resource - Stephanie.Ng@chiavic.com.au.

These resources are outlined in the tables below, and resources with the symbol indicates those developed in partnership with the MAV. The resources are categorised according to their intended use:

- **General understanding of SAH** – these resources help stakeholders improve their general understanding of social and affordable housing, for example, what it is, why it is important, and who lives in it.
- **General understanding of options** – these resources help stakeholders within council and community housing organisations get a general understanding of some of the options for to facilitate social and affordable housing. For example, leasing council owned land for the development of social housing.
- **Detailed understanding** – these resources help council and community housing staff understand concepts in more detail to inform decision making. For example, what are some of the common reasons for opposing social and affordable housing.

These resources can be found on the [developing affordable housing page](#) and [support for community housing](#) page of the CHIA Vic website.