

## Better planning for affordable housing

### What are we asking for?

**Tasmania's planning system needs to play its part in helping to meet our housing needs by encouraging affordable housing in our cities and towns.**

**Tasmania's planning legislation does not provide any clear policy on housing.<sup>i</sup> This lack of strategic approach means that important opportunities are being lost,** such as the inclusion of affordable rental housing on government-owned land at Hobart's Macquarie Point.

Planning plays an important role in guiding and shaping our communities, and yet there is a lack of integration between Tasmania's planning system, Tasmania's Affordable Housing Strategy and the State's Population Growth Strategy. Tasmania's growing housing crisis highlights the need for better integration between each of these.

Since 2014, Tasmania has had a

**36%**

increase in social housing applications<sup>ii</sup>

Other States have adopted progressive approaches to addressing their housing needs through their planning systems. It is time to modernise Tasmania's planning system to help deliver much needed affordable housing for Tasmanians.

**A commitment that any government land released for residential development will include affordable rental housing in the form of public and community housing is needed.**

### Why is this important?

How we regulate development through the planning system affects the type and location of the housing that we get, and the wellbeing of communities that are formed. Flexible planning regulations can encourage a diversity of housing to meet different people's needs, such as homes designed for living with a disability and homes people can age in. Planning can also help increase the supply of affordable housing and, together with the use of government owned land, it can even increase the supply of public and community housing.

**Hobart**

is Australia's

**2nd least**

**affordable**

capital city, after Sydney<sup>ii</sup>

### What is the issue?

Tasmania has a growing housing crisis, with housing affordability across the State declining in recent years. The latest Rental Affordability Index (RAI) shows that housing stress is rising up the income ladder, now also affecting working families. Since reporting began in 2015, the RAI has shown Hobart as Australia's second least affordable capital, after Sydney.<sup>ii</sup>

This lack of affordability means that more than 14,500 households in Tasmania live in housing stress

(where households pay more than 30% of their income on housing). It has also contributed to an increase in the number of people applying for public and community housing (by 36% since 2014), and unprecedented levels of homelessness.<sup>iii,iv</sup>

The planning system can't solve this, but it can be part of the solution. When social inclusion is not deliberately planned for people on low incomes, people with disabilities, the young and elderly can become excluded. People with low incomes are progressively pushed out to less central areas further from jobs, services and opportunity. The lack of diversity can limit housing options for someone with a disability, or people wanting to move from their family home to something smaller. Development opportunities that can contribute to affordable rental housing can also be lost.



If housing costs exceed **30%** of a low income household's (households with the lowest 40% of income) gross income, then that household is experiencing housing stress<sup>ii</sup>



**14,500**

Tasmanian households live in housing stress<sup>v</sup>

**Responding to Tasmania's housing crisis means we need to use all the tools available to us. The planning system must play its role.**

*Shelter Tasmania asks all parties to bring together government, community and private sector stakeholders in a Tasmanian Housing Summit, to find ways to work together to solve the housing crisis.*



## Further Information

Please see Shelter Tasmania's Election Priorities Overview for further information, available online at [www.sheltertass.org.au/news/tas-election-2018/](http://www.sheltertass.org.au/news/tas-election-2018/)

## End Notes

<sup>i</sup> Tasmania Planning Commission (2016). *Draft State Planning Provisions Report – December 2016*. Hobart

<sup>ii</sup> SGS Economics and Planning 2017, *Rental Affordability Index, May 2017*. Community Sector Banking, National Shelter and SGS Economics and Planning: Canberra

<sup>iii</sup> Department for Health and Human Services, Human Services Dashboard Statistics

<sup>iv</sup> AIHW Special Homelessness Services 2011-12 and 2015-16, Supplementary Tables, Tasmania

<sup>v</sup> Where households pay more than 30% of their income on housing