



Lyndell White House Coburg – Redevelopment by Wintringham Housing Pic: HBV Architects

# **Affordable Housing Action Plan**

## **Annual Report 2021**

## Introduction

The Moreland Affordable Action Plan (AHAP) has four Focus Areas under which achievable and effective actions are identified for implementation by officers across Council. These are:

1. Facilitate the supply of affordable housing in new developments
2. Develop affordable housing on Council land
3. Advocate for effective policy and increased investment
4. Build community capacity to support people in housing crisis.

Focus Areas 1-3 aim to directly increase the provision of affordable housing in Moreland.

The actions under Focus Area 4 are about services for those who do not currently have secure housing

In March 2021 Council committed to develop a Four Year Affordable Housing Action Plan by May 2022. It also resolved to add two additional actions to Focus Area 4:

- 4.6 Monitor and advocate for Emergency housing availability in Moreland
- 4.7 Ensure that modifications to open space and public areas not exclude homeless people



# Summary of 2020/21 activities and achievements

## Focus Area 1 - Facilitate the supply of Affordable Housing

### Lead Implementation Units: Strategic Planning & Urban Planning

**Action 1.1: Facilitate affordable housing through voluntary s.173 agreements, promoting the trial of the Design Excellence Scorecard and in value capture from rezonings.**

Officers in the Urban Planning and Strategic Planning Units, supported by the Principal Advisor Social and Affordable Housing, have seen an increase in positive outcomes through negotiating voluntary agreements from developers and landowners to contribute affordable housing in new developments. Agreements are usually secured through an agreement under section 173 of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* which places conditions or restrictions on the use or development of the land.

Notable outcomes include:

#### 541 Sydney Rd Coburg

55 unit development on land provided by Development Victoria to the not-for profit Barnett Foundation. Permit granted with agreement to provide 50 affordable apartments for purchase.

#### 98-102 Albert Street, Brunswick East

Under amendment C192, 98-102 Albert Street, Brunswick East was rezoned to Commercial 1 Zone. It is supported by a S173 agreement requiring 20% of the residential dwellings to be rented out as affordable dwellings (no more than 30% of income) for 10 years.

#### Sheppard Street Precinct, Coburg North

Consistent with Moreland Industrial Land Strategy 2015-2030 (MILS), this proposal seeks to transition from industrial to residential use through land rezoning. It proposes to provide affordable housing at a rate of 5% dwellings at a minimum discount of 50% of the market value for sale to a registered housing agency. This steps up to a rate of 10% of dwellings at a minimum of 50% discount for 16-20 Sheppard Street if a five-storey development is proposed.

#### Nightingale Village, Duckett and Hope Sts, Brunswick

This is currently under construction with a planning condition that was originally expected to deliver 14 affordable dwellings. However, Housing Choices Australia report that it will have 21 apartments and Womens Property Initiatives will have nine, bringing the affordable housing component to 30 or almost 15% of the total apartment yield in the six building development.

#### 9-21 Wilson Ave, Brunswick

Developer Neometro agreed to a planning condition on an apartment development requiring a \$415,000 towards a purchase of at least one dwelling by a registered housing provider.

#### 35 Pentridge Boulevard, Coburg

Developer Golden Peak signed a s173 agreement which will see 3% of the approximately 176 dwellings in the BLVD Gardens development discounted at construction cost price for use as affordable housing.

**Action 1.2: Develop resources and support ongoing training for staff to facilitate affordable housing outcomes.**

Officers attended specialist affordable housing workshops, training and professional development programs provided by industry bodies and organisations including the Urban Development Industry Association, Planning Institute of Australia, the Australasian Housing Institute and Homes Victoria.

### **Action 1.3: Align the Moreland Planning Policy Framework to the State Planning Policy Framework to strengthen affordable housing objectives in the Moreland Planning Scheme.**

The Smart Planning reform program aims to make Victoria's planning system more efficient and accessible. In January 2021 Amendment C200: Translation of the Planning Policy Framework introduced changes into the Moreland Planning Scheme which included clearer policy objectives in planning for affordable and accessible housing. These are:

- 16.01-1L Homes in Moreland
- 16.01-1L Housing for people with limited mobility
- 16.01-2L Housing Affordability

### **Action 1.4: Participate in the Inter Council Affordable Housing Forum (ICAHF) to work with the State Government to further requirements for affordable housing to be provided by private development.**

Officers from Moreland participated in six regular and special meetings of the ICAHF during 2020/21 including facilitating a special meeting in December 2020 in response to the state government's Big Housing Build announcement. The ICAHF has grown to have participation from officers from the majority of councils and shires in Victoria. As well as being a peer exchange network for knowledge transfer of innovative practice and new initiatives in local government, it has been a key forum for communication with the state government on affordable housing policy.

## **Focus Area 2 - Develop Affordable Housing on Council land**

### **Lead Implementation Unit: Strategy and Research**

#### **2.1: Allocation land for a housing project**

Moreland Council agreed to invest \$4.1m of land at 2-12 Wilkinson St, Brunswick for an affordable housing project to be undertaken by Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd (MAH). The sale agreement ensures that 85% of the proposed 34 apartments developed on the site must be affordable housing and at least half of these will be provided as social housing. This followed by a community consultation process on the proposal which attracted 140 submissions, many of which were in favour of the sale.

#### **2.2: Support the operations of Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd**

Council provided \$211,808 to Moreland Affordable Housing Ltd (MAH) from the Moreland Housing Reserve in 2020/21 and supported the employment of a part-time Executive Officer. MAH undertook a selection process to engage a Housing Association as a strategic development partner. In June 2021 it signed a partnership agreement with Haven Home Safe. MAH also commissioned iC2 architects, working with Schored Projects, on a design proposal for a 34-unit apartment block at 2-12 Wilkinson St, Brunswick.

## **Focus Area 3 - Advocate for effective policy and increased investment**

### **Lead Implementation Unit: Strategy and Research**

#### **3.1: Advocate to the State Government to include mandatory Affordable Housing contributions in the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPP)**

The state government indicated that proposals for planning system changes with regard to inclusionary zoning (inclusionary zoning is zoning that requires a percentage of new development as affordable housing) and provisions supporting mandatory affordable housing contributions were still under consideration. Council has continued to make the case for change through advocacy including its submission to the State Government's 10 Year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy.

In 2021 Council joined in the formation of the M9 Committee. M9 is an alliance of nine inner Melbourne councils that represent the collective interests of inner Melbourne. The Committee is comprised of the following Councils: Darebin, Hobson's Bay, Maribyrnong, Melbourne, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Port

Phillip, Stonnington and Yarra. As part of its initial work, officers from each Council worked together to draft an advocacy paper of common goals in social and affordable housing.

### **3.2: Lobby State and Federal government for a sustained increase in capital investment and use of surplus land for public and community housing**

In November 2020 the State Government announced a \$5.3 billion program to increase social affordable housing over four years under banner of the Big Housing Build (BHB) overseen by Homes Victoria. Up to October 2021, Homes Victoria have committed a total of \$112.9m in BHB funding in Moreland. This is made up of a \$23.5m 70 unit development in Pascoe Vale to be developed and operated by Housing Choices Australia, and \$89.4m to purchase 189 dwellings from its spot purchase program.

### **3.3: Encourage new social housing developments in Moreland**

Officer engagement with social and affordable housing stakeholders including the Department and Health and Human Services, Community Housing Industry Association, Council to Homeless Persons, Housing Choices Australia, Development Victoria, Wintringham, Women's Property Initiatives, Community Housing Ltd, Launch Housing, Vincent Care, Housing First, Common Equity Housing Ltd and Haven Home Safe.

This engagement reinforces the message to housing sector players that Moreland is a welcoming and facilitative Council in looking at potential new social and affordable housing developments or improving and expanding policy responses.

### **3.4: Support the Moreland Housing Advisory Committee**

The Advisory Committee held its last meeting in 2020. Following a review of all advisory committees by Council, a new Affordable Housing Reference Group will be established in FY21/22.

## **Focus Area 4 – Build community capacity to support people in housing crisis**

### **Lead Implementation Unit: Community Wellbeing**

#### **4.1: Provide information on services & resources to the community (including trader and community organisations)**

All Council staff have information for effectively responding to rough sleeping in a manner consistent with Council's obligations under the *Victorian Charter of Human Rights and Responsibilities*. This information is shared as required with people experiencing rough sleeping, traders, organisations and community members.

#### **4.2: Build capacity of council officers to have a Human Rights-informed response to situations involving community members in crisis**

An online session attended by over 80 staff was held which focused on a "Homelessness 101" – a Q&A with Vincent Care staff responding to queries about rough sleeping

#### **4.3: Maintain effective networks with government, community and not for profit organisations**

Council regularly refers information to Vincent Care on people sleeping rough in Moreland. If a staff member receives a query from a community member about a person sleeping rough, the team at Vincent Care assess the persons situation, offer an alternate housing solution which in most cases will only be temporary, or provide any other type of service or assistance required.

Council officers are working with Launch Housing to look at implementing a 'Functional Zero' approach to rough sleeping in the municipality. If the number of people getting safe and secure housing exceeds the number of people experiencing homelessness, then we reach Functional Zero. It requires a high

degree of multi-agency coordination. After being successfully rolled out in the City of Port Phillip, Functional Zero programs are now in place in the cities of Melbourne, Frankston and Stonnington.

Moreland continues to attend the Northern Local Area Service Networks meetings and the Melbourne Metro Rooming House Working Group (MMRHG)

#### **4.4 Promote the Community Grants Program**

In the 2020 Grants program the Melbourne Homeless Collective was successful in gaining an Operational Grant of \$10,000 per year over three years. The Collective's mission is to be a leading charity responding immediately to the complex needs of people experiencing homelessness and associated causes for homelessness, such as family violence, and housing unaffordability.

As part of Council's COVID-19 response, Northern Community Legal Centre received a grant to provide a legal clinic for international students. The clinic offered advice on housing and renting rights and other matters affecting the lives of international students.

#### **4.5 Research location and prevalence of rough sleeping**

#### **4.6 Monitor and advocate for Emergency housing availability in Moreland**

Moreland has been participating in the local North & West Metropolitan Homelessness Network (NLASN). Through this network a list of 'hot spots' has been developed so that we can more adequately encourage referrals in these areas and ensure that people are being included in the ABS census.

#### **4.7 Ensure that modifications to open space and public areas not exclude homeless people**

The Urban Design Unit updated the Moreland Technotes by in August 2020 to include guidance which supports providing public space which supports people who are homeless:

*The design and construction of the public spaces (new and retrofit) will need to ensure our public spaces are welcoming and inclusive of all users, and that no community members are excluded from accessing our public spaces due to any element of the design or infrastructure.*

## **Additional actions and activities**

### **High Risk Accommodation Response Program (HRAR)**

The Moreland High Risk Accommodation Response Program (HRAR) began in late 2020 with the aim to prevent, prepare for and respond early to COVID-19 infection, to minimise transmission in high risk shared facilities accommodation, including high-rise and low-rise social housing, supported residential services (SRS) and rooming houses. Moreland HRAR is led by Merri Health with Moreland City Council Merri Outreach Support Service and the Department of Families Fairness and Housing engaged as governance and delivery partners.

During 2021 the Program expanded its scope to include promotion and facilitation of vaccinations and providing intensive support to public housing blocks in Tier 1 quarantine. The hundreds of direct contacts with highly disadvantaged community members created opportunities for referrals to health and material support services.

### **Abandoned vehicles income for Moreland Housing Reserve**

In 2018 Council resolved (DCI45/18) to allocate 50% of the funds from the proceeds of the sale of abandoned vehicles by Council to the Moreland Housing Reserve. In 2020/21 this resulted in a \$77,896 transfer to the Reserve.

### **Support for people who are homeless at leisure centres**

\$10,000 was allocated in the 2021/22 Council budget to make lockers and towels available to unhoused community members at Moreland's leisure centres.

## Homes for Homes Initiative

In December 2019, Council became the first local government to partner with Homes for Homes, a philanthropic initiative that raises funds for affordable housing through a small contribution on sale of a property.

- Homes for Homes was specified in the Community Benefit criteria for the Moreland Design Excellence Scorecard for townhouse developments
- Each of the 1211 planning permit decision notices sent out in 2020/21 contained information about the Homes for Homes initiative.

Moreland City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi Wurrung people as the Traditional Custodians of the lands and waterways in the area now known as Moreland. We pay respect to their Elders past, present, and emerging, as well as to all First Nations communities who significantly contribute to the life of the area.