

Q & A – Community Housing Mason St, Warragul

What is community housing?

Community housing refers to housing owned or managed by a diverse range of non-government housing providers that have not for profit and social objectives. Community housing offers a different approach, where people are considered over profit.

Community housing providers (CHPs) like **Housing Choices Australia** are not-for-profit organisations that exist to build and manage safe, secure and affordable homes for renters.

Renters pay no more than 30% of income; community housing is funded by a combination of state, federal and local government contributions, private loans and partnerships.

We re-invest any surplus revenue into new housing, better services or improving our properties.

We deliver support and services to help renters experiencing disadvantage.

We are deeply committed to the communities in which our buildings and residents sit.

Why do we need community housing?

Private market housing cannot provide housing to lower income households if the market price or rent is greater than their housing budget. In addition, the amount of public housing built by Government in Australia over the last decade has not kept pace with demand. **With poverty around 13 percent in Australia**, the need greatly exceeds the supply (currently 3-4 per cent of all housing stock is social housing). This explains the severe pressures on the system and a highly targeted allocations system.

Who lives in community housing?

People living in community housing come from all walks of life and circumstances. The one thing they all have in common is they can't afford to buy a home or pay market rent.

Are these homes really affordable?

Generally, **renters in not-for-profit community housing pay no more than 25-30 per cent of their household income** plus any Commonwealth Rent Assistance to which they're entitled for their home.

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How does allocation work?

There are 118,000 Australian households living in community housing.

Housing Choices allocates properties according to its formal Eligibility and Allocations Policy, which is required and regulated by the Victorian Housing Registrar.

Many factors are taken into account when allocating tenants, including but not limited to:

- Location of the dwelling and whether the applicant has ties to that area (e.g. family, work, study)
- The size of the dwelling in relation to the size of the applicant's household
- The applicant's car use and whether the dwelling comes with a carpark
- Suitability of the dwelling for the applicant's needs
- Suitability of the applicant to the existing dwelling/community
- Availability of specific support services in the area
- Whether the tenancy can be sustainable over the long-term

How long do Housing Choices residents tend to stay in their home?

As a registered housing provider, Housing Choices must report certain statistics to the Victorian Housing Registrar each year. One of these statistics is the percentage of residents who remained in their tenancies from the start of the financial year to the end of the financial year. Housing Choices' statistics for Victoria are as follows:

- FY19/20 – 91.19% tenancies maintained
- FY20/21 – 90.92% tenancies maintained
- FY21/22 to date – 96% tenancies maintained

Where else is community housing located?

There are thousands of social homes across Australia, many managed by not-for-profit community housing organisations.

They come in many forms, from free-standing homes and townhouses, duplexes, apartments and villas in existing developments to shared accommodation and more.

Not-for-profit community housing organisations build and manage high-quality buildings. Many are architecturally designed, and new properties are built to the highest possible standards. Visit our website for examples of our other properties and stories about the people that live in our communities www.housingchoices.org.au.

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What is proposed to be built?

Housing Choices has secured a funding contribution under the Big Housing Build to build a 4-storey community housing development above a partially raised basement level at 8-18 Mason Street and unmade road to the rear of the property referred to as Paper Road. The 51-unit development will feature one, two and three-bedroom apartments across two separate residential buildings and include a basement, office and multi-purpose space on the ground floor. All dwellings are designed to Livable Housing Australia Silver Level, 5 Star Green Star and 7 Star NatHERS ratings. The development includes 38 car parks and 56 bicycle parks. Our proposal has been informed by professional team of architects, town planners, and engineers. It has been designed to respond to the planning regulations that apply to the subject land.

Once construction is complete, Housing Choices Australia will manage these dwellings on behalf of the Victorian Government.

How can I participate in the Community Consultation process?

Community Information Session

An in-person drop-in session will be held on Thursday 11 May 2023 at 3:30-5pm AEST at the West Gippsland Art Centre. An online information session will be held on Wednesday 17 May 2023 at 7pm AEST. The project team will present the plans and attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions at both sessions.

If you wish to attend either session, please RSVP using the online form at <https://www.housingchoices.org.au/housing/in-progress/warragul>. You will receive further details about the sessions via email.

Written feedback

Written feedback can be submitted at <https://www.housingchoices.org.au/housing/in-progress/warragul> from Monday 8 May 2023. Feedback must be received by 5pm on Wednesday 31 May 2023 AEST.

Collected information will be used for submission to the Department of Transport and Planning and Homes Victoria. The consultation report will redact all personal information, including names, addresses and emails.

What will be done with feedback and how will I find out the outcome?

Any feedback received by the due date will be compiled into a consultation report, which will be provided with the application submitted to the Department of Transport and Planning for consideration by the Minister for Planning under Clause 52.20. This consultation report will include Housing Choices' response to the feedback and how this has been incorporated into the final plans (where applicable). Not all issues raised in consultation may be able to be resolved to the satisfaction of the person raising the issue, however Housing Choices will demonstrate how the issues have been considered.

The responsible authority (the Minister for Planning) will then assess the application and make a determination accordingly.

The consultation report will be made available on Housing Choices' website after the Minister for Planning makes a decision on the proposal.

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What is the Big Housing Build and Clause 52.20?

The Big Housing Build is a partnership between the Victorian Government and not-for-profit community housing organisations which provide safe, secure and affordable homes for renters. The Big Housing Build is expected to deliver over 12,000 new dwellings and will boost social housing across Victoria by 10%.

Streamlined planning processes have been introduced for Victoria's Big Housing Build to assist with achieving these targets. The new Clause 52.20 of the Victorian Planning Provisions provides for planning approval from the Minister for Planning for developments funded through the Big Housing Build. The provision does not provide for the conventional notice and referral of applications, and results in a decision to approve the application, rather than the issue of a planning permit.

More detail can be found at planning.vic.gov.au.

Design features

- All electric
- 7 Star NatHERS rating
- Certified Green Star rating
- Photovoltaic array located on roof
- Central communal and garden space
- Ample secure bicycle parking, close to public transport
- 38 car parks
- Located within Warragul town centre and withing walking distance of the Warragul train station

Key details

- Forecast completion date – 2025
- Location – Warragul, VIC
- Local council – Baw Baw Shire
- Apartment mix – 25x 1 bed, 19x 2 bed, 7x 3 bed
- Architects – Freadman White Architects
- Builder – TBC
- Landscaping – Simon Ellis Landscape Architects
- Planner – Tract
- Funding – Homes Victoria, Social Housing Growth Fund Regional Round
- Address – 8-18 Mason Street, Warragul and unmade road to the rear of the property
- Responsible Authority – Department of Transport and Planning