

Housing and Homelessness

Everyone deserves a safe and affordable home



The Commonwealth and Victorian Governments have strengthened their focus on tackling Australia’s housing crisis, including an ambitious reform agenda aimed at increasing housing supply, improving affordability, and addressing homelessness.

The **National Housing and Homelessness Plan** sets a 10-year vision and provides direction for collaboration across all levels of government, and with the private and community sectors.

The Victorian Government’s **Housing Statement** was released in 2023, and broadly welcomed by the local government sector.

It commits to increasing supply with 800,000 homes to be built in Victoria over the next decade, and provides a strong focus on concentrating housing in vibrant and liveable areas, close to transport, employment opportunities and community services.

Yarra Ranges: Opportunities and Challenges

Housing needs in Yarra Ranges are diverse, and tailored solutions are needed to meet the distinct needs of our urban and regional communities.

The Eastern Metropolitan Region alone is facing a shortfall of 11,7000 homes by 2032.

There is significant potential in townships on the urban fringe, such as Lilydale and Mooroolbark, which have been recognised as regionally important hubs through the Victorian Government’s investment in level crossing removal projects and the Lilydale Revitalisation project.

Lack of supply and affordability is creating a multitude of pressures in Yarra Ranges, including rental blackholes in the Hills and Valley townships and the inability of businesses to attract workforces – particularly in the agriculture, hospitality, and health sectors. Innovative solutions, such as tiny homes, and the re-instatement of the Dependent Persons Unit definition in the planning scheme will help to ease some of these pressures.

Further, short term rental accommodation (STRA) is a key challenge that requires a strong policy response and leadership by the state government to balance the opportunities for tourism and other short-term rental needs, with the need for available and affordable housing for permanent local communities.

Yarra Ranges Council	Victoria Government	Commonwealth Government
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and Wellbeing Plan • Housing Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Statement • Victoria’s homelessness and rough sleeping action plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Housing and Homelessness Plan

Council is working on land identification and viability, innovation SAH models and with a range of partners to support an increase in supply of social and affordable housing, given the significant investments being made through both the Commonwealth and Victorian Governments. This includes consideration of innovative housing approaches, underpinned by strong community engagement to support tailored, sustainable and successful housing models.

Council is also working closely with local housing and homelessness service providers to develop targeted responses to local challenges.

The following investments and policy shifts would support stronger provision of housing and homelessness services in Yarra Ranges.

Initiative	Requirements (Investment and Policy)
<p>★ Short Term Rental Accommodation (STRA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (the Act), to update or expand the purpose of the Act to provide for the establishment of a short stay accommodation or short stay rental register. <p>The Act considers minimum standards associated with rental properties, regardless of if they are rented for a short or long period of time. The Act requires compliance with the Residential Tenancies Regulations 2021, which covers minimum standards under Schedule 4 requiring the general minimum safety standards for a house.</p> <p>With STRAs currently being exempt from registration, it is extremely difficult for Council to: regulate and ensure community health and safety standards are being complied with, monitor the number of STRAs, monitor impact on communities, identify gaps within the planning scheme.</p> <p>An amendment to the Act to establish a state-wide register for STRA would allow for consistent standards to be regulated across Victoria.</p>
<p>Social and Affordable Housing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Release suitable government land in Yarra Ranges for social and affordable housing. Provide investment to urgently increase the number of social housing dwellings, and crisis accommodation units in Yarra Ranges. Increases to Commonwealth Rental Assistance to assist those struggling in private rentals. Amend Victorian legislation to better enable the provision of social and affordable housing including: the introduction of 'inclusionary zoning', controls around underutilised properties, and controls to improve the safety and affordability of rooming houses. Council will advocate for the Cerini Centre Social and Affordable Housing project which is being led by the Warburton Advancement League to build social housing in the Upper Yarra Valley.
<p>Homelessness services</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fund local homelessness services to provide a homelessness outreach case management service, and a drop-in service in Yarra Ranges.

★ **Priority initiative**

For more details, visit
yarraranges.vic.gov.au/advocacy