



City of Whittlesea



DPV Health

HOUSING CHOICES AUSTRALIA



Whittlesea Community Connections

## Whittlesea Housing and Homelessness Action Group Submission to the Victorian Government 10 Year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy

The Whittlesea Housing and Homelessness Action Group (WHHAG) is made up of 10 local community, health and housing providers committed to informing, supporting and advocating for improved long-term housing outcomes in the City of Whittlesea. The WHHAG has developed a ten-year vision and action plan to address the growing, yet often hidden, problem of housing and homelessness in the City of Whittlesea.

The WHHAG is a partnership between:

- City of Whittlesea
- DPV Health
- Haven Home Safe
- Home Ground Real Estate Launch Housing
- Hope Street
- Housing Choices Australia
- Merri Outreach Support Services
- Whittlesea Community Connections
- Women's Property Initiative and
- Yarra Plenty Regional Library

The City of Whittlesea and WHHAG share a vision for people living in the City of Whittlesea to have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing that recognises their place in and connected to community. WHHAG supports the City of Whittlesea's Submission to the Victorian Government 10 Year Social and Affordable Housing Strategy, which the WHHAG also contributed to.

In addition to the City of Whittlesea's Submission the WHHAG would like to highlight some key points in response to Discussion Paper questions.

### Focus Area 1: Pathways

To enable people to access social housing, sustain their tenancies, and move between different housing options as their needs change integrated planning and support of people's individual and household needs are required. This requires the housing sector to increasingly work in partnership with the family violence, mental health, criminal justice and others to ensure individual needs are fully understood, better managed and supported.

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Affordability location, security of tenure, access to transport and amenities including support services are all important features of affordable housing. This is particularly important in outer-suburban areas such as Whittlesea where access to amenities is limited and under- resourced.

To support people to find and obtain affordable housing accessible supports in community are needed this includes enhanced access to Initial Assessment and Planning (IA&P) services in outer-suburban and rural areas. The WHHAG has prioritised advocacy and support to establish an outreach IA&P service or access point in Whittlesea in its' action plan and 10 year vision.

**Focus Area 2: Communities**

To strengthen social and affordable housing communities new social and affordable housing should be delivered in areas that have access to economic and social supports and opportunities.

**Focus Area 3: Growth**

To ensure housing supply meets the needs of people with specific support and housing needs particular attention on women and families experiencing family violence, young people, poor mental health and people living with a disability is needed. The WHHAG supports local efforts to establish emergency and transitional accommodation for young people and families in Whittlesea including Hope Street's Youth First Response facility. Housing options for women, children and young people at risk of homelessness due to family violence are also desperately needed.

To enable a well-functioning affordable housing system increased rental housing options that safeguard tenant's rights are urgently needed. Currently the housing and community sector dedicate significant time and energy working in the private rental market with varying degrees of success and outcomes for those experiencing housing stress. The WHHAG also supports the need for crisis accommodation for families in Whittlesea along with additional and more diverse options for long-term housing.

**Focus Area 4: Partnerships**

The WHHAG in partnership with the City of Whittlesea welcomes the opportunity to engage with the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing and Homes Victoria on this strategy as well as our ten-year shared plan that responds to housing and homelessness in the CoW.

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