ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Mesh Planning, Urban Enterprise and Affordable Development Outcomes were commissioned by the Wodonga Council to prepare a housing strategy for the city. Mesh Planning was commissioned by the Wodonga Council to prepare a Neighbourhood Character Analysis.

AECOM Australia were commissioned by the Wodonga Council and seven regional councils (Greater Geelong Council, Greater Bendigo Council, Ballarat Council, Greater Shepparton Council, Baw Baw Shire Council, Wangaratta Council and Moorabool Shire Council) to undertake a pilot project to assess how greenfield subdivisions can be more environmentally sustainably designed and delivered to achieve multiple benefits in the most cost effective way over time. The regional councils were awarded funding through the Collaborative Councils Sustainability Fund Partnership Program Round 3 to undertake this project. This report informs the Sustainability chapter of the Wodonga Housing Strategy.
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- Wodonga is an attractive destination for existing and future residents given its relative affordability of housing, and range of employment and lifestyle opportunities.

- Despite Wodonga's ample land supply, some issues are emerging in terms of affordability which may affect Wodonga's competitive advantage.

- High levels of land supply are not translating into a high level of diversity in housing size and type – larger lots and larger, detached houses make up most of supply.

- There are some identified gaps in the market in terms of provision of aged care beds and smaller dwelling sizes.

- Wodonga's planning policy system is well structured, not overly restrictive or onerous, and is capable of supporting diverse housing development. However, some challenges have been identified at an implementation and process level, in terms of providing clarity and certainty to the development industry about preferred outcomes and facilitating development through the process.

- A key strength of the Wodonga housing market is diversity in greenfield price points (i.e. diversity in value of estates).

- Wodonga is well placed to respond to objectives of liveability and prosperity, while maintaining its competitive advantage of affordability.

- The section on Affordable Housing notes that there is evidence that housing stress, homelessness and risk of homelessness are increasing, and that an increased supply of affordable housing is required.

- The Neighbourhood Character Analysis documents character types for Wodonga's neighbourhoods, outlining preferred future neighbourhood character for each area, including implementation recommendations. The study identifies a range of issues that currently influence neighbourhood character, including lack of design guidelines, misuse of development plan overlays and ad-hoc use of agreements and development covenants. The analysis suggested implementation measures to address these issues, including education and process improvements.

- Environmentally Sustainable Design for subdivisions in Regional Victoria: Proof of Concept and Cost Benefit Analysis identifies a roadmap to progressively improve the sustainability and climate resilience of subdivision and housing. The report identifies a range of cost effective measures which can assist in improving the thermal comfort and reducing operational costs of housing, improving affordability of housing over its life cycle.
PART A

OVERVIEW
Wodonga is a major centre within the Hume region, with a rapidly growing population, expected to reach almost 58,000 by 2036 and with an ultimate capacity of 100,000 people.

Wodonga offers a range of lifestyle and economic advantages, making it an attractive place for residents and business to locate, and will play an important role in accommodating forecast population growth in regional Victoria.

Wodonga’s key competitive advantages over other regional centres lies in its relative affordability, and the economic prosperity and lifestyle on offer in the form of:

- Local employment;
- Range of education and community services;
- Access to higher order services across both Wodonga and Albury;
- Attractive and well serviced neighbourhoods;
- Diverse open spaces and appealing natural landscape features; and
- Relative housing affordability.

However, rapid growth and economic prosperity mean a number of challenges remain in ensuring Wodonga’s housing supply and stock meet the community’s evolving needs. This is particularly true for maintaining the relative affordability of Wodonga’s housing market, while also ensuring housing:

- Is of the size, type and tenure to meet the diverse needs of the community;
- Is of high quality and contributes positively to neighbourhood character;
- Meets sustainability objectives; and,
- Provides options for members of the community in housing stress or requiring access to affordable and/or subsidised housing.

The Wodonga Growth Strategy, adopted in 2016, provides a long-term vision for the city and clear direction across a range of council functions to ensure that growth can positively contribute to Wodonga’s liveability and prosperity. The growth strategy identifies a number of specific objectives relating to housing, which should be addressed via the preparation of a Housing Strategy.

The Wodonga Housing Strategy provides a detailed overview of the land-use factors and current and projected trends in regards to housing diversity, affordability and sets the direction the council will take to continue to seek to influence and improve housing affordability and facilitate an increase in affordable housing.

The housing strategy will provide guidance for growth and change in Wodonga’s housing market for the forecast period until 2036. The strategy will be reviewed every five years to ensure that it continues to meet the housing needs of the community as Wodonga grows and changes.
What is a housing strategy?

Housing is a fundamental human need, and central to the health and well-being of individuals and communities. Access to appropriate and affordable housing, with a stock that caters for changing household needs over time, enables people in Wodonga to stay within the municipality, and will also play a significant role in attracting new residents and investment into the area.

Housing needs and supply are influenced by a range of factors including federal and state policy levers. However, as housing affordability decreases across the country, the need for leadership at all levels of government, becomes more important.

A Housing Strategy plays a critical role in articulating Wodonga Council’s approach to meeting the housing needs of the current and future Wodonga community.

The Wodonga Housing Strategy:

- Articulates a framework to guide the council’s action/intervention in housing issues from a land use planning perspective;
- Communicates the council’s objectives and responsibilities with regard to housing matters;
- Provides clarity and certainty about future residential development policies and actions for all stakeholders (community, development industry, council officers and councillors);
- Provides an integrated body of work which captures the key aspects of housing supply and demand for Wodonga;
- Identifies housing stock diversity targets and how these targets can be achieved;
- Provides a clear direction and policy guidance to enable orderly growth, manage change and retention of key elements of neighbourhood character;
- Develops a strategy for residential growth that considers the specific pressures for housing in Wodonga and the desire to support investment and access to key activity centres;
- Provides a basis for the council to develop a clear vision on housing issues across Wodonga and thus:
  - Update the planning scheme as appropriate to reflect that vision and strategic directions – zones, schedules, overlays; and,
  - Have a clear perspective on the likely issues of affordability and emergency care needs and establish key directions for future assessments and strategy development in these areas;
- Acknowledges that the sustainability of our housing and neighbourhoods could be improved to accommodate more climate and site responsive housing which better responds to a hotter and drier climate with increased heatwaves and extreme weather events; and,
- Articulates a roadmap to progressively improve environmentally sustainable design in subdivision and housing.
**Structure of the housing strategy**

The overarching objective of the Wodonga Housing Strategy is to maintain and enhance Wodonga’s traditional competitive advantage in terms of quality, diversity and affordability in housing choice.

To do this, the Wodonga Housing Strategy has been structured to have regard to six pillars that underpin and frame the strategy:

- **Land Supply** – how much zoned land and what type of land is available to be converted into housing stock
- **Choice** – is there choice in the housing market in terms of location, price point and block size
- **Diversity** – is there diversity in housing stock in terms of type and size of housing (e.g. house, apartment, number of bedrooms etc.) and tenure (homeownership/rental).
- **Affordable housing** – is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate-income households as covered in the affordable housing section of this strategy.
- **Quality** – is housing delivering high quality outcomes in terms of amenity and responding and contributing
- **Sustainability** – is housing sustainable in terms of use and energy efficiency.

The second three pillars will be addressed in a second part to the strategy addressing housing issues at a more individual dwelling detailed level and are comprised of separate chapters of this strategy.

**Figure 1: Framework of the Wodonga Housing Strategy**
positively to neighbourhood character (informed by the Neighbourhood Character Analysis which forms part of the Wodonga Housing Strategy. This document should be read in conjunction with the Neighbourhood Character Analysis as it provides clearer and more specific recommendations and actions for preferred neighbourhood character, future residential zoning, urban design, etc).

**Sustainability** - is housing adhering to sustainable design principles at both the dwelling and subdivision level (informed as part of the Environmentally Sustainable Design for subdivision in Regional Victoria: Proof of Concept and Cost Benefit Analysis, May 2018 (the ESD study), which will become a reference document to the Wodonga Housing Strategy). This document should be read in conjunction with the ESD report as it provides the rationale and further detail informing the recommendations and actions for improving ESD).

Within each focus area, a series of actions have been identified that will contribute to achievement of the objectives within the housing strategy, identifying how and when each action should be undertaken, by:

- Identifying what type of action it is;
- Who should take the lead on each action;
- What the council’s role is in undertaking the action; and,
- In what timeframe the action should be completed.

**Council Role**

 Council Responsibility – Actions the council implements

 Council Advocacy – Actions where the council influences others to act

 Council Collaboration – Actions where the council collaborates with other stakeholders

**Timing**

- Immediate – within the next year
- Short – 1 to 2 years
- Medium – 2 to 4 years
- Long – 4 years +
- Ongoing
Role of Local Government

Wodonga Council will play an important leadership role in meeting the community’s housing needs, providing strategic direction to guide the future mix, location and design of housing.

However, housing is a broad and complex issue influenced by a range of interrelated factors, and as such, the council must be deliberate in the role it elects to play. Key areas where the council plays an important role in housing is in:

- Monitoring – collecting relevant information to understand the housing market, how it is changing, and the needs of the community.
- Planning and Policy – ensuring the Local Planning Policy Framework responds to housing needs and priorities, and provides strategic direction to achieve desired outcomes. This includes the preferred location for different types of housing and the guidelines for the way housing is designed.
- Advocacy and partnerships – working proactively with the State and Federal Government, agencies and the development industry to promote desired housing outcomes, and the provision of infrastructure and services to support housing.
- Capacity Building – providing information and education to individuals, communities, organisations and industries to increase the abilities and ownership of those involved in delivery of housing and decision-making that influences housing outcomes.

Why do we need a housing strategy?

Wodonga does not presently have a policy to guide housing planning and development across the municipality. The Wodonga Growth Strategy and Safety, Inclusion and Equity Strategy identified the need for a housing and affordable housing strategy to provide direction in encouraging a range of residential development outcomes that meet the city’s projected growth in a sustainable manner, and improve access to affordable housing.

The council wants to take a proactive lead in the development of a prosperous and liveable city with housing a key measure towards this goal.

It is envisaged that a planning scheme amendment will be prepared to implement the housing strategy outcomes.
LOCAL CONTEXT

Wodonga’s physical and historical context is unique in respect to its location proximate to Albury, its topographic features (growth is largely contained via the surrounding hills) and its higher order movement network (the city is accessible via the Hume Freeway and heavy rail) (See context plan overleaf).

One of the fastest growing regional cities in Victoria, Wodonga comprises a range of well-established suburbs, newly emerging communities in designated growth areas and several smaller townships.

Across the municipality, Wodonga has enough zoned land supply (primarily General Residential and Urban Growth Zone, and land within the future growth corridor) to accommodate an ultimate population of approximately 100,000 people.

Wodonga has traditionally had a strong foundation for planning complete, liveable and sustainable neighbourhoods, and delivering diversity and housing affordability to its communities via the Albury-Wodonga Development Corporation (AWDC).

The AWDC was of critical importance to the establishment of Wodonga as a key regional city, via delivery of coordinated land supply and housing to the Albury-Wodonga market from 1973 to the 2000s. With the withdrawal of the AWDC from development functions, and the subsequent sale of its land bank, Wodonga experienced a significant ‘correction’ in its housing market (in terms of price and supply) in the early 2000s that reinforced its relative affordability.

Wodonga’s housing market since the withdrawal of the AWDC has been characterised by private development, primarily in greenfield development areas, across multiple growth fronts. Some of these growth fronts are the result of the historical sale of AWDC and former defence land over a short period of time that has resulted in a housing market characterised by small subdivisions dispersed throughout the municipality. The dispersed nature of subdivision has been reinforced by the small number of local land developers in Wodonga, resulting in a less focused housing market and enabling the market to react more quickly to changing demand.

Proactive facilitation of multiple growth fronts has been, and continues to be, a key strategy of council in order to maintain a robust and competitive housing market.
Wodonga’s Central Business Area (CBA) also plays an important role in Wodonga’s housing market. Council’s focus on revitalisation of the CBA serves to:

- Create investment confidence in the city;
- Plan for commercial growth and activation;
- Establish strategic redevelopment sites; and
- Strengthen the liveability and accessibility of the city centre for the community.

Through this focus, the revitalisation of the CBA will create an environment in which residential development will be both supported and demanded by the community.

What is important to recognise in this context, however is that Wodonga’s housing market is in the relatively early stages of its maturity (for example, when compared to some other comparable regional cities such as Albury and Bendigo, which are currently moving into a phase focused on consolidation). While revitalisation of the CBA is a positive initiative, the flow on effects at a housing level are likely to take considerable time to be realised.

A complex interplay of factors impact on housing supply, demand and affordability, including population and demographic change, market regulation, financial systems, employment and income trends, as well as housing typologies and trends.

The need for affordable housing in the Wodonga area has been categorised as “high need or demand” that is expected to persist or worsen.

- 213 persons were estimated to be homeless in the Wodonga - Alpine region in 2016.
- 2017 individuals sought assistance from homelessness service providers between 2012 and 2014.
- 397 households on the Victorian Housing Register for Ovens-Murray (Wodonga) region, 152 priority households.
- Rental affordability for all dwellings has declined from 63.7 per cent in 2000 to 56 per cent in 2017.
- In 2017, 44 per cent of all dwellings made available to rent in the market and 81.1
One of the fastest growing regions with annual population growth rate of 1.9% p.a.

Majority one or two person households. Average households 2.47 persons.

Median age 36 years

Median household income $1245 per week (2016)

Very young (aged 5 to 9 years) and people over 65 years fastest growing groups

Figure 3: Key population and market indicators in Wodonga

One per cent of one-bedroom lettings were not affordable for very low income households\(^5\)

\(^5\) 1389 low income renters were in housing stress in 2016, representing 72 per cent of all low income private renters and 27 per cent of all renter households\(^6\)

\(^6\) Median house prices increased by 32.29 per cent from 2007 to 2017\(^7\)

\(^7\) 419 low income households with a mortgage were in housing stress in 2016, representing 43 per cent of all low income mortgage holders and 8.5 per cent of all mortgage holders\(^8\)

In Wodonga, the main household groups are families and sole person households, with an average household size in 2016 of 2.5 persons, and the fastest growing household groups are very young people and people over 65 years.

**Demand is expected to remain for predominantly 3+ bedroom houses with an increasing need for 1 and 2 bedroom houses, retirement and aged care facilities.**

\(^5\) La Trobe University (2016) Housing Affordability and Homelessness in the Hume Region - Victoria
\(^6\) ID Consulting (2018) City of Wodonga Social Atlas
\(^7\) ID Consulting (2018) City of Wodonga Social Atlas
\(^8\) ID Consulting (2018) City of Wodonga Social Atlas
One of Wodonga’s competitive advantages as a regional city is its supply of a range of housing that is relatively affordable. It is also recognised that despite the apparent prosperity of the city, there are sections of the community that are still disadvantaged. As a leader within the community, the council also advocates for the introduction of affordable housing to provide for the needs of those who are unable to meet costs of housing by themselves.

The term ‘housing affordability’ refers to the relationship between expenditure on housing (prices, mortgage payments or rents) and household income.

Housing affordability is increasingly an issue as median house prices increase relative to incomes. It is a key concern for lower income households who have reduced financial resources to meet housing costs.

Sustainability can improve housing affordability over the life cycle of buildings. Energy efficient housing is more thermally comfortable, reduces heating and cooling costs and offers positive health benefits to residents.

Affordable housing is defined by the Victorian Government as “housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households”.

Very low income households are defined as households earning less than 50 per cent of the gross median household income, low income households those earning less than 80 per cent, and moderate income households earning less than 120 per cent gross median household income.

Appropriateness of housing includes size (bedroom numbers), location, accessibility and quality.
Glossary

**Affordable Housing**: Affordable housing is defined by the Victorian Government in Section 3AA of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as “housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of very low, low and moderate income households”.

**Detached Dwelling**: One dwelling on a site that is held exclusively with that dwelling and has a frontage to a public road or to a road proposed in a land division.

**Dwelling**: A building or part of a building used as a self-contained residence, which includes: a kitchen sink; food preparation facilities; a bath or shower; and a wash basin.

**Greenfield**: Undeveloped land zoned for residential development on the fringe of the established metropolitan area. These areas are generally used for rural purposes until residential subdivision takes place. This type of land is also referred to as ‘broadhectare’.

**Green Infrastructure**: Describes the green spaces and water systems which interperse, connect and provide vital life support for humans and other species within our urban environments. Green infrastructure exists across a range of scales – from residential gardens to local parks and housing estates, streetscapes and highway verges, services and communications corridors, waterways and regional recreation areas.

**Housing Affordability**: Relates to the general affordability of housing, including access to home ownership, for the broader population.

**Housing Stress**: Housing stress is defined as when a household is paying more than 30 per cent of income on rent or up to 35 per cent on rent or mortgage for higher income households. A ‘30/40 rule’ places a focus on those as households in the lowest 40 per cent of income (very low and low income) who are paying more than 30 per cent of their usual gross weekly income on housing costs and are therefore considered to be in significant housing stress.

**Infill**: Development of unused or underutilised land in existing urban areas. Most infill development sites are inner and middle suburbs, offering the possibility of better utilising existing infrastructure to accommodate population growth.

**Integrated Water Management**: A collaborative approach to planning that brings together all elements of the water cycle including sewage management, water supply, stormwater management and water treatment, considering environmental, economic and social benefits.

**Liveability**: Refers to a community’s quality of life and experience. It is influenced by an array of factors including the quality of the natural and urban environment, social and economic aspects (e.g. level of crime, safety and access to everyday services, facilities and employment) as well as the quality and availability of urban amenities.

**Medium Density Housing**: Housing with an average density of 16 to 30 dwellings per net development hectare.

**Neighbourhood character**: “The combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure contributes, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character” (DELWP, 2018). Refer to Chapter 3 NCA Understanding Neighbourhood Character for further discussion.

**Overlays**: Planning controls that assist council to determine the type of development that occurs relative to specific aspects of the land (e.g. vegetation and landscape, heritage and built form). It can protect these attributes and/or constrain development of land.
Private realm: The report identifies the private realm as the spaces in which residents occupy, defined by the boundaries of a lot, and including the dwelling and front garden.

Public realm: The public realm is defined as the spaces which are available for everyone to use and enjoy such as streets and parks.

Representative Concentration Pathways (RCPs): Prescribed pathways for greenhouse gas and aerosol concentrations used by the climate modelling community.

Semi-detached dwelling: A building comprising of two dwellings erected side by side, joined together and form a single building.

Sense of place: Having a strong sense of place refers to having a strong identity that is perceived and identifiable by Wodonga’s residents and visitors. A neighbourhood’s sense of place can be reflected in its neighbourhood character.

Social Housing: Social housing is housing owned and managed by the Director of Housing (public housing) and housing owned, controlled or managed by an agency registered under the Housing Act.

State Planning Policy Framework (SPPF): Comprises of general principles for land use and development in Victoria. The SPPF sets visions, objectives, strategies and decision guidelines that must be taken into consideration by local councils when making a planning decision.

Strategic development sites: Another form of infill development that occurs on larger or consolidated sites that have been identified as having capacity to support increased density residential development that will contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the neighbourhood.

Strategic infill areas: Another form of infill development that occurs on land in a residential zone within 400m walkable catchment from activity centre zone (refer to Figure 34).

Super lots: Typically found in greenfield subdivisions, when a larger than normal lot is created, whereby the subdivision and/or development on the super lot is subject to a separate planning process (i.e. Further subdivision or development, such as medium density housing.

Sustainable Neighbourhoods: This refers to sustainable forms of development, through the integration of the economy, the community and the environment within the planning, design and maintenance of Wodonga’s new residential areas and in the redevelopment of existing areas. Refer to Clause 21.07-3 Sustainable Neighbourhoods of the Wodonga Planning Scheme for further detail.

Urban amenities: Urban amenities (e.g. open space, recreational facilities, pedestrian spaces such as footpaths, access to goods and services) contribute significantly to the living experiences within Wodonga’s neighbourhoods.

Victorian Planning Authority (VPA): A State Government statutory authority that reports to the Minister for Planning, founded originally to plan Melbourne’s new suburbs within the growth corridors.

Water Sensitive Urban Design: Water-sensitive urban design is a planning and engineering design approach which integrates the urban water cycle, including stormwater,
groundwater and wastewater management and water supply, into urban design to minimise environmental degradation and improve aesthetic and recreational appeal.

**Wodonga Planning Scheme:** A legal document that sets out policies and provisions for the use, development and protection of land use in the City of Wodonga. It contains State and local planning policies, zones and overlays and other provisions that affect how land can be used and developed. It indicates if a planning permit is required to change the use of land, or to construct a building or make other changes to the land.

**Youth Foyer:** Youth Foyer is a type of transitional accommodation that provides accommodation to young people who are homeless (or at risk of homelessness), and who are studying or want to study.

**Zones:** Relates to a particular land use and is associated with a specific purpose such as residential, commercial or industrial. All land is covered by a zone in Victoria.
PART B

HOUSING IN WODONGA
An important consideration of the Housing Strategy is whether the housing market in Wodonga responds to the needs of the growing population. The figure below provides a snapshot of the key population and housing market indicators within the city and the background report provides an analysis of the current housing market, and the projected changes in the community’s needs.

What is clear from this snapshot and the background report is that Wodonga’s population is expected to significantly grow and change over the next 20 years. Land supply and housing stock has generally kept pace with growth in the past, however, the changing needs of the community, particularly in groups such as families, lone person households and older people, are changing the type of housing that’s needed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>POPULATION</strong></th>
<th><strong>HOUSING SUPPLY</strong></th>
<th><strong>AFFORDABILITY</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39,844 households</td>
<td>16,521 dwellings</td>
<td>32% low-income households in housing stress compared to regional average of 10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average household size 2.5 persons</td>
<td>Median House Price $340,000</td>
<td>43% low-income mortgage holders in housing stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median age 36 years</td>
<td>Median Unit Price $215,000</td>
<td>72% low income renters in housing stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.821 (19.6%) households are low income</td>
<td>33.3% increase in land price between 2005 and 2016</td>
<td>56% of new private lettings affordable for housing in statutory income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fastest growing households - very young and over 65</td>
<td>Median lot size 692m²</td>
<td>Only 18.9% one bedroom dwellings are affordable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median household income $1,269 per week</td>
<td>Majority existing and new supply 3 and 4 bedrooms</td>
<td>397 households on the public housing waiting list</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25% households own their home, 32.5% have a mortgage</td>
<td>Less than 20% all housing stock is 1 or 2 bedrooms</td>
<td>15% of all requests for housing assistance reside in social housing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.5% households rent in the private market</td>
<td>932 social housing dwellings (6.2%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2 households live in social housing</td>
<td>Median rent $300 per week</td>
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</tbody>
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Figure 4: Snapshot of the key population and housing market indicators in Wodonga
Housing affordability (and key areas such as land supply, choice of land and housing diversity) is affected by a range of supply and demand factors. This chapter provides a broad overview of the drivers of change in housing in the Wodonga context. It is important to keep in mind that each of these drivers of change are complex and interrelated, and as such, require an integrated and cohesive response.

**Policy context**

Federal, State and Local policies influence the supply, type and affordability of housing in many complex and interrelated ways. At all levels, weakening housing affordability is recognised as a key challenge that must be addressed. A unique challenge to Wodonga is its proximity to Albury, which is affected by a substantially different legislative and policy context (being in NSW).

In 2018, the Victorian Government has amended the *Planning And Environment Act* to incorporate a new objective of planning "to facilitate the provision of affordable housing" and a definition of affordable housing.
## INTERNATIONAL CONVENTIONS

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Disability Discrimination Act 1992</td>
<td>Planning and Environment Act 1987</td>
<td>Other council policies Including:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Affordable Housing Agreement</td>
<td>Housing Act 1983</td>
<td>Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Partnership on Homelessness Agreement</td>
<td>Subdivision Act 1988</td>
<td>Sustainability Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Disability Insurance Scheme</td>
<td>Climate Change Act 2017</td>
<td>Safety, Inclusion and Equity Strategy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>State Planning Policy Framework</td>
<td>Social Inclusion Policy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Plan Melbourne</td>
<td>Disability Action Plan</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Homes for Victorians’ Affordable Housing Strategy</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ending Family Violence: Victoria’s Plan for Change</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hume Regional Growth Plan</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victoria’s Climate Change Framework</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victorian Climate Change Adaptation Plan (2017-2020)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Victorian Charter of Human Rights</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Wodonga Planning Scheme
- Wodonga Growth Strategy
- Wodonga Housing Strategy
- Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy
- Sustainability Strategy
- Safety, Inclusion and Equity Strategy
- Social Inclusion Policy
- Disability Action Plan
- Access for All Strategy
- Wodonga Climate Change Adaptation Plan 2017-2021
- Leneva-Baranduda Whole of Water Cycle Management Plan

**Figure 6: Policy context**
Plan Melbourne

Victoria is the fastest growing state in Australia, growing by 476,400 people between 2010 to 2015. Melbourne has accommodated 423,600 people, or 89 per cent of this growth (Australian Bureau of Statistics). The Victorian government’s response to this population growth is outlined in Plan Melbourne, which states “with Victoria’s population projected to rise to around 10 million by 2050, regional cities will need to take a greater share of population growth. This will enable regional cities to offer more opportunities to their residents and mitigate some of the population pressure on Melbourne”. As such Victoria’s regional cities will play an increasing role in accommodating the state’s growth.

Principle 3 A city of centres linked to regional Victoria

The central city will remain the focus for global business and knowledge-intensive industries linked to an extensive network of clusters, centres, precincts and gateways. These physical, social and economic links will be strengthened, turning Melbourne into a city of centres linked to regional Victoria—creating social and economic opportunities across the state.

Hume Regional Growth Plan

The Hume Regional Growth Plan identifies opportunities to encourage and accommodate growth to manage change in the region over the next 30 years. The Hume Region encompasses several municipalities in Victoria’s north east which includes Wodonga. The plan strives to achieve a resilient, diverse and thriving region that harnesses growth for the benefit of the region and develops liveable and sustainable communities.

Wodonga Growth Strategy

The Growth Strategy is based on the expectation that Wodonga will continue to grow and develop over an extended period, with this growth having the capacity to enhance the composition of the city if properly directed and delivered cooperatively. This growth will be guided by the twin ideals of prosperity and liveability, which are seen to best represent the unique character, composition and distinct identity of the city.

The Growth Strategy identifies a range of objectives to ensure that there is a diverse range of housing options available to meet the needs of the community. These objectives acknowledge that greenfield development will deliver the largest proportion of new housing stock, but also encourages delivery of diverse and alternative housing in the form of infill development and development of strategic development sites.

Relevant housing strategies from the Growth Strategy include:

- Encourage delivery of a range of lot sizes and diverse housing outcomes, balanced with consideration of site constraints and existing and future market acceptance of housing forms
- Maintain multiple development fronts as a means of facilitating competitive and affordable land supply
- Seek an overall density target for new development of 10 lots per hectare
- Allow some reduction to density targets where land is constrained (for example, by slope, native vegetation, drainage etc.) or where it can be demonstrated that appropriate diversity in lot sizes and housing forms is being delivered
- Support a distributed approach to delivery of medium density
housing that will contribute to the diversity of housing choice across neighbourhoods

- Support well-designed and incremental infill within the existing neighbourhoods in the form of medium density housing that is respectful of the neighbourhood character.
- Prioritise creation of character and delivery of diversity as a priority consideration in new housing.
- High quality urban design-led approaches to residential and urban development.

Key actions of the Wodonga Growth Strategy (Action A4 and A5) is to:

Prepare a Neighbourhood Character Analysis to identify existing and preferred neighbourhood character across Wodonga’s different neighbourhoods. The Neighbourhood Character Analysis will be used as an input to the Housing Strategy.

Prepare a Housing Strategy that seeks to achieve the objectives of the growth strategy, by encouraging a range of residential development outcomes that meet the city’s projected growth in a sustainable manner.

Wodonga Council Plan 2017-2018 to 2020-2021

The council’s overarching Vision, reflected in its Council Plan is that ‘Wodonga is a progressive, well-planned, growing city that is affordable, offers an abundance of opportunities and led by strong, empathetic stewardship’, with key health and wellbeing priorities within the Plan including ‘diverse and affordable housing for everyone’, recognising the importance of housing affordability and affordable housing to the growth of Wodonga.

Targeted land-use planning strategies to improve and maintain housing affordability sit within the strategy, with important linkages to the provision of affordable housing supply, particularly regarding land availability and cost, construction costs, and tenure and dwelling size and diversity.

Safety, Inclusion and Equity Strategy 2016-17 to 2021-22.

The Safety, Inclusion and Equity Strategy 2016-17 – 2021-22 also sets a priority to reduce homelessness in Wodonga and sets key Objectives and Strategies the council will take to meet this outcome, including Objectives to participate in collective approach to strengthen the service sector and improve pathways into housing in Wodonga; work to reduce housing stress in the community; and use council planning, regulatory and policy mechanisms to increase housing diversity and affordability.
Wodonga Planning Scheme

The Wodonga Planning Scheme guides land use and development within the municipality.

The State and Local Planning Policy Frameworks (the SPPF and LPPF) contain several provisions that relate to housing at a strategic policy level, while the zones, overlays and particular provisions guide implementation (i.e. development). The Planning Scheme is the key tool that guides decision making by responsible authorities in relation to subdivision and development of land for housing.

As it relates to housing, the planning scheme is implemented by local governments when making decisions on planning permit applications; for example, applications for subdivision, dwellings on small lots and multiple dwellings on a lot. Despite being a key component of the process of delivering housing to market, the planning scheme alone offers somewhat limited scope to influence overarching housing affordability outcomes, particularly in relation to the pillars of choice, diversity, affordable housing and sustainability. The planning scheme is most influential in relation to land supply (for example, rezoning new land for housing) and quality (particularly in the area of neighbourhood character).

This limited scope is because most of housing development (i.e. construction of a single dwelling on a lot) does not trigger a planning permit, and the planning scheme offers somewhat limited ability to put in place mandatory controls relating to matters such as housing diversity and affordable housing.
Table 1: Planning Scheme as relevant to Housing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>What it does</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>21.02 Vision and Strategic Framework</td>
<td>Sets out Wodonga’s community vision:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“In 2033 Wodonga will be an accessible, connected, sustainable City with a vibrant economy which fosters a sense of belonging and welcomes residents and visitors.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>A specific vision relevant to housing is also included:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“A City which maintains a sufficient land supply which accommodates different lifestyle choices and the sustainable growth of the City”.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.03 Settlement</td>
<td>Sets out a range of issues, objectives and strategies in relation to Settlement. With regard to urban growth, there is a focus on land supply, access to services and facilities, and lack of connectivity of multiple growth fronts.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>While an activity centre hierarchy is established, policies focus on their role as commercial centres, and provide limited reference to their role in accommodating residential development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.07 Built Environment and Heritage</td>
<td>Seeks to facilitate the design of healthy, safe and inclusive communities, based on a model of ‘sustainable neighbourhoods’.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.08 Housing</td>
<td>Recognises lack of diversity and lack of affordable housing as key issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.13 Local Areas</td>
<td>Provides a vision and more specific policy guidance for particular local areas, including the CBA, Bonegilla and Leneva-Baranduda Growth Corridor (pending preparation of the Precinct Structure Plan, the policy seeks to avoid further fragmentation of land in the corridor).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 2: Zones and how they are used in Wodonga

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Zone</th>
<th>What it does</th>
<th>How is it applied in Wodonga?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Residential Zone (GRZ)</td>
<td>Respects and preserves urban character while enabling modest housing growth and housing diversity.</td>
<td>Most of Wodonga’s residential areas are zoned as the General Residential Zone (GRZ). The Schedule 1 to the zone does not specify any additional requirements, such as in relation to setbacks, private open space or maximum building heights. Use of the GRZ indicates a fairly flexible approach to residential zoning, it does not place restrictions on housing such that the Neighbourhood Residential Zone would impose, nor does it signify that there are key areas where council is encouraging high rates of change, as would be implied by the Residential Growth Zone.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Density Residential Zone (LDRZ)</td>
<td>Provides for larger lots, with lots sizes having regard to whether there is access to reticulated sewer.</td>
<td>Primarily used located on the fringes of Wodonga, at the interface with farming land. While forming part of Wodonga’s diverse housing offer, these areas are not intended to accommodate any significant housing growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)</td>
<td>Enables a mix of residential and non-residential development, with residential development generally expected at higher densities.</td>
<td>Currently used in three locations: West Wodonga, Riverside Estate and White Box Rise. West Wodonga accommodates a range of employment uses (the Albury Wodonga Enterprise Park) and residential development, including the Wodonga Gardens Retirement Estate. The design of the area is guided by a Design and Development Overlay (DDO1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity Centre Zone (ACZ)</td>
<td>Enables consolidated community services, shops, offices and housing (at higher densities) within activity centres</td>
<td>Applied to the Wodonga Central Business Area (CBA). Schedule 1 provides a Framework Plan for the CBA, and objectives relating to different precincts within the CBA.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Growth Zone (UGZ)</td>
<td>Enables a range of uses and development, including new housing, community facilities and activity centres in greenfield growth areas (once a Precinct Structure Plan has been gazetted).</td>
<td>Applied to land in the Leneva-Baranduda Growth Area. A Precinct Structure Plan and associated Development Contributions Plan is currently being prepared in partnership between council and the Victorian Planning Authority.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Township Zone (TZ)</td>
<td>Enables consolidated commercial, industrial and other community uses in small towns and housing which respects neighbourhood character</td>
<td>Applied to land in the Bonegilla Structure Plan area. The MSS identifies the vision for a ‘village scale’ settlement in the lakeside setting including limited employment uses with an ultimate capacity of 500 lots. There is no development contribution plan in place to fund infrastructure.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Figure 8: Wodonga zoning
Figure 9: Wodonga overlays
Garden Area Requirements

The recently introduced Garden Area Requirements (March 2017) affect the General Residential Zone and the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (not currently utilised in Wodonga).

The new requirements were introduced by the State Government to balance the need to support different housing outcomes whilst also ensuring the ‘green, open character’ of neighbourhoods and suburbs are protected.

Table 3 provides a summary of the proportion of each lot size that is required to be set aside as garden area when constructing or extending a dwelling on a lot (or subdividing a lot when creating a lot less than 400m2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Size</th>
<th>Min. percentage of a lot set aside as garden area</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For vacant lot less than 400m2* (when subdividing)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>400-500m2</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-650m2</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above 650m2</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Does not apply if specified in the schedule to the zone as exempt from the minimum garden area requirement or where designated as a medium density housing site in an approved precinct structure plan, an equivalent strategic plan or approved development plan

Table 3: Garden Area Requirements

In Wodonga, the garden area requirements are most likely to impact on incremental infill development in the established neighbourhoods – for example, subdivision of a standard residential lot (e.g. 800m2) into two or more lots.

An analysis has been undertaken, based on previous patterns of this type of incremental subdivision, to determine whether the garden area requirements are likely to be a constraint to further infill development. The analysis identified that in general, infill development that has occurred in the past either meets or exceeds the garden area requirements, and as such, the controls are unlikely to be a significant constraint on incremental infill development.

As part of the Neighbourhood Character Analysis, an analysis of more recent proposals and developments was undertaken to understand the likely implications of the garden area requirements on new housing forms. The outcomes of this analysis suggest that garden area requirements will not be a limitation to delivering more intensive development if land is zoned General Residential Zone, where there is an incorporated plan or approved development plan, as outlined in the Victorian Planning Provisions Amendment VC143 (DELWP, 2018). Should higher density development be desired, neighbourhood character implications and objectives, which were prepared as part of the Neighbourhood Character Analysis should be carefully considered and holistic planning is still required so that higher density development does not impede on amenity and neighbourhood character.

In addition, an analysis of standard volume builder products in greenfield areas has identified that in general, most products will meet the garden area requirements.
Planning processes

Planning processes and excess regulation are often cited as limitations to delivery of housing affordability, by delaying delivery of housing to market, and placing additional burden on the cost of development. Key criticisms have included:

➤ Complex planning provisions that place emphasis on compliance at the expense of positive outcomes
➤ Uncertainty and inconsistency with regard to decision-making
➤ Lack of clarity about preferred outcomes in infill areas and on strategic sites

Wodonga’s greenfield and redevelopment areas are guided primarily by the use of Design and Development Overlays and Development Plan Overlays. The use of Development Plan Overlays (and the subsequent Development Plans it triggers) was subject to review in 2015. The Wodonga Planning Scheme Review 2013 also identified this issue and proposed that a DPO and DDO review should be undertaken.

The key outcome of the DPO review in 2015 was an acknowledgement that the DPOs and Development Plans are important tools for coordinating housing development, and that there are opportunities to improve the process by simplifying requirements and providing greater certainty with regard to what a Development Plan should contain and the collaborative process in which they should be prepared.

Key themes explored in the review were:

➤ Uncertainty by the development industry about what a Development Plan looks like and how it is used
➤ The need for early involvement (i.e. by council and agencies) to ensure issues are identified and to support developers through the process
➤ Process certainty and decision-making (including council’s role, culture, communication and direction in the planning and development process).
Figure 10: Current and Potential Strategic Development Sites in Wodonga
Land Supply

While Wodonga is growing at a rapid pace, the city has ample zoned land supply to accommodate an ultimate population of approximately 100,000. This land supply is to be developed in accordance with the settlement hierarchy identified in the Wodonga Growth Strategy (refer to Figure 9 of the Wodonga Growth Strategy).

Action 1.3 of the Wodonga Growth Strategy establishes a key strategy to develop in accordance with the settlement hierarchy, to “oppose requests for rezoning of non-urban land for urban purposes unless exceptional circumstances apply including it:

► Demonstrates consideration of the overall urban form of the city and relationship to natural features and logical limits to development;
► Is located in close proximity and well-connected to existing or planned urban growth;
► Will result in a form of development that cannot be provided on land that is already zoned for urban purposes;
► Will achieve a significant improvement in the standard of development including its environmental performance;
► Incorporates a design response that demonstrates exceptional adherence to the principles of sustainable neighbourhoods; and,
► Can be provided with reticulated services present.”

Wodonga’s growth takes the form of:

► Greenfield Growth – new development located on the urban fringe to the west, east and south east of the city. Wodonga’s growth areas have traditionally been distributed around the city; a legacy of the AWDC’s involvement within Wodonga’s land market. The largest growth area, Leneva-Baranduda, has the capacity to accommodate a significant proportion of Wodonga’s new dwellings.

► Infill – incremental housing development occurring in existing neighbourhoods, often in the form of re-subdivision or development of individual sites.

► Strategic development sites – another form of infill development that occurs on larger or consolidated sites that have been identified as having capacity to support increased density residential development that will contribute to the vitality and vibrancy of the neighbourhood. Figure 10 highlights strategic development sites within the CBA that were identified as part of the CBA revitalisation project.

► Low density, rural living and rural settlements – incremental housing growth delivered in rural areas and small townships. This type of housing does not make up a large proportion of housing in the municipality, but is part of the diverse housing options that are available.

Currently, greenfield growth produces much of dwelling supply in the Wodonga market by a significant margin, primarily in the estates of White Box Rise, Riverside Estate and Whenby Grange.

New greenfield growth in the Leneva-Baranduda Growth corridor will deliver substantially more development opportunities. In this context, and given the ‘lifestyle’ preferences of many residents of Wodonga and the relative affordability of greenfield land supply, encouragement of increased densities in infill areas and strategic redevelopment sites is likely to be challenging in the short term. Notwithstanding, stakeholder consultation indicated there is unmet demand for higher density residential development. Further, it is important that a diverse range of land supply is facilitated.
Figure 11: Active housing estates
Demand for housing is strongly influenced by changes in population and household type.

**Population growth**

Total housing demand will largely be influenced by macro level and regional population growth. This includes an ageing population, the increase in migration and increases in fertility (more babies being born).

**Household Types**

Dwelling demand will not solely be generated by additional household growth, there will also be household lifecycle changes, preferences and needs. Additional dwelling demand will be generated via down/upsizing, changing tenure (i.e. rental to purchaser). Other drivers of household types include economic pressures (including the increasing costs of housing and children living at home for longer) and social trends (higher rates of divorces and single parents). Figure 12 provides an overview of the complexity of household lifecycles.
Figure 12: Household life cycle changes
The current population of Wodonga is 39,844, living in 16,521 dwellings.

Wodonga’s population is projected to increase by 42 per cent (or 17,173 residents) between 2016 and 2036, at a rate of 859 residents and 331 dwellings per annum. The greatest growth is projected to occur in groups aged between 0-17 and 35-49.

The median age is 36, significantly younger than the regional Victoria median. This young age profile suggests that there is likely to be large numbers of people progressing through to homeownership/homebuilder over the next 20 years, driving demand for additional housing.

Despite a relatively youthful population profile, the proportion of older people (60+) are expected to increase the most across the projected age profile (from approximately 19 per cent in 2016 to over 22 per cent in 2036). This growth highlights the need to ensure the housing market meets the needs of the aging population, providing opportunities to downscale housing as required, or to move into appropriate aged care housing if needed.

The Housing Strategy Background Report (section 5.4 Dwelling Size & Figure 17 and Table 24) indicates more than 50 per cent of small households (e.g. couple with no children & lone person households, which cover the older population) live in dwellings with three or more bedrooms. These may indicate an emerging trends that these households are not moving out of the family home, which could reflect their preference to maintain a bigger house for visiting family members or there is a lack of housing choice available for downsizing.
Wodonga is typically characterised as having larger households, with couples with children being the overwhelming household type. The average household size is increasing from 2.51 in 2011 to 2.55 persons per household in 2036, this notably is in contrast to state wide trends for decreasing household sizes. This increasing household size is reflective of Wodonga’s relatively young population profile (compared to regional Victoria), and is a significant point of difference in the context of the region’s liveability, and when considering Wodonga’s attractiveness as a place for young families. This trend toward larger household sizes is in part generating demand for larger homes.

However, it is also notable that over 2006-2016, the percentage of lone person households has increased substantially, and as such, there may be increased demand for smaller dwelling types. As there is very limited supply of smaller dwelling types in the Wodonga market, this change in household size may point to a significant level of unmet demand for certain types of housing.

An alternative view, however, is that while growth in lone person and other smaller household types grew at a higher rate than larger household types (such as couples with children) this does not necessarily translate directly to demand for smaller or alternative housing types (such as semi-detached dwellings, unit or apartments). Given the relative affordability of land, the price advantages of smaller housing types (such as one and two bedroom homes, and alternatives to detached housing), may not be significant enough to generate substantial market demand or investor interest.
Housing Characteristics

Most housing in Wodonga is characterised as detached housing (85 per cent), with the majority having 3 or more bedrooms. This profile is generally consistent with other Victorian regional cities. Albury differs slightly in having a higher proportion of semi-detached houses. Units/Apartments and other housing types form a very small percentage of dwelling types in Wodonga and all benchmark cities.

The most common lot size of Wodonga’s occupied housing stock (occupied by a dwelling) is between 500 and 1000sqm, or 59 per cent of all residential properties.

The tendency toward larger dwelling types and lot size may be indicative of Wodonga’s relative affordability when compared with Albury (in Wodonga you can buy more for less), and the attractiveness of Wodonga for ‘lifestyle’ reasons, where larger homes on larger lots are sought.

This could also be a possible result of Wodonga as a developers driven market (due to the relatively lack of competition among developers in the region), see section on Land Ownership.

It is also important to recognise that trends in housing stock are not equally distributed across the city, larger, detached homes are more likely to be found in outer areas, such as Baranduda, as opposed to Wodonga central.
Figure 13: Dwelling Structure, Wodonga and Regional Victoria and Albury (Source: ABS Census, 2016)

Figure 14: Focus on 70-100% data only for Dwelling Structure, Wodonga and Regional Victoria and Albury (Source: ABS Census, 2016)
WODONGA HOUSING STRATEGY

Housing Supply and Production

Wodonga has ample supply of zoned residential land (30+ years of supply) in its greenfield areas. However, over the period 2010 to 2016, annual lot supply has been in steady decline and the number of active residential estates in the municipality has declined.

The reason for the reduction in annual lot supply is not clearly apparent from the data, however, anecdotally there is evidence to suggest that lot supply has reduced as land becomes more constrained, and therefore more difficult to develop (refer to Development Influences) and as developers seek to manage market prices (for example, by withholding supply).

However, what is apparent is that following the withdrawal of the AWDC, there was a price correction upwards (once prices were no longer fixed), followed by an increase in competition and ultimately land prices levelled out.

Following the transition to a private sector development industry, Wodonga’s greenfield housing market demonstrates a high degree of diversity in terms of price points, catering to a range of markets:

- High value estate – lots generally selling in excess of $150,000
- Mid-high value estates – lots generally selling for between $130,000 to $150,000
- Low-mid value estates – lots generally selling for between $100,000 and $130,000; and
- Entry level – lots generally selling for less than $100,000.

Median lot price in 2017 was $139,800 (Victorian Government 2018, Guide to Property Values 2017)

This diversity in price point is a key strength of Wodonga’s housing market, which the City will look to maintain and enhance as new greenfield estates open in new growth areas, in order to accommodate and attract a diverse community. There are actions identified which seek to maintain this key strength.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lot Size (SQM)</th>
<th>Vacant residential</th>
<th>Detached dwelling (urban)</th>
<th>Rural residential</th>
<th>Semi-detached/unit</th>
<th>Retirement/aged care</th>
<th>Student/boarding</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-300</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>301-500</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>501-700</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>701-1000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1001-2000</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001-4000</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4001-10000</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10000+</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Number of Residential Properties by type and size range 2016 (Source: Urban Enterprise, 2016)
Prices

The data demonstrates that Wodonga is a relatively affordable place to both buy and rent. Figure 15 and the table below set out the median house, land and unit prices in 2017. House prices have increased most significantly over the past 30 years, while unit and vacant land prices have remained relatively stable. This may in part be due to the relative affordability of purchase prices for houses, enabling first home buyers to move straight into larger homes than was traditionally the case. The substantial price correction evident in 2002-2005 is representative of the effects of the AWDC withdrawal from the development industry and selling of its land bank.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Median Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>$139,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>House</td>
<td>$340,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unit</td>
<td>$215,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

![Figure 15: Residential Price Growth 1985-2018 (Source: A Guide to Property Values, Valuer-General Victoria)](image-url)
In terms of vacant lots, what is relevant to acknowledge, as an indicator of Wodonga’s liveability and prosperity, is that there are a range of price points within the city, indicative of a diversity of lifestyle options and estate locations and features.

*Figure 16: Vacant Lot Values (Source: City of Wodonga Rates Database, 2016)*

The median rent in Wodonga is currently $300 per week (Dec 2017), with standard escalations in rent corresponding to the size of the dwelling (refer to Figure 17). The majority of rental properties, are 3 bedroom houses which reflects the characteristics of Wodonga’s housing stock.

*Figure 17: Number and affordability of private rental dwellings (2017) by quarter (Source: DHHS (2018) Rental Report, Affordable Lettings by LGA, 2017 quarters)*
Tenure

Housing tenure provides an insight into the socio-economic status of the community, and their relative mobility.

Despite the abovementioned relative affordability of Wodonga, in 2016, 36 per cent of all households were renting in the private market, higher than regional Victoria benchmark cities of Geelong (28 per cent), Ballarat (32 per cent) and Bendigo (28 per cent). However, the rental rate is similar to Albury at 34 per cent. This result highlights the importance of the rental market in the Albury-Wodonga area, which may be indicative of a more transient workforce, but is also an important consideration given renting is the predominate housing tenure of lower income households.

The lower levels of housing owned outright in Wodonga, as compared to regional benchmark cities is likely to be indicative of the relative young and mobile population, with fewer 'empty nesters'. Rental rates may also be a reflection of a greater proportion of investment properties in the area to service that market (i.e. strong rental returns compared to capital cities).

*Figure 18: Dwelling Tenure (Source: Urban Enterprise, 2016)*
Retirement and aged care

In 2011, there were 240 residential aged care places occupied in the City of Wodonga, equating to 81.7 places per 1000 residents aged over 70 in the municipality.

This was slightly lower than the state average of 87.3 places, and the non-metropolitan average of 88.4, indicating that there may have been a lack of aged care places available in Wodonga.¹

According to the Aged Care Service List (Australian Government Department of Health, 2016) there were 294 residential aged care beds available in 3 facilities in Wodonga as at June 2016.

In the ABS Census 2011, there were 180 dwellings in the City of Wodonga located in a ‘retirement village’, comprising 1.1 per cent of all dwellings in the municipality.

This is lower than the other benchmark regional cities, including Albury, Shepparton, Ballarat, Bendigo and Geelong.

The highest proportion of these cities was in Albury (3.4 per cent), indicating that some of the demand for retirement dwellings from Wodonga is likely to be met by retirement villages north of the Murray River.

¹ PHIDU Social Atlas, 2011
DEVELOPMENT INFLUENCES

There are a range of development influences that affect the supply of relative housing affordability, as summarised below:

- Land form and conditions (slope, elevation, vegetation, encumbrances, accessibility etc)
- Servicing and infrastructure (particularly in elevated land)
- Concentration of developable land interests (i.e. large land parcels controlled by small number of developers) and fragmentation of land ownership
- Charges on development, such as Development Contribution Charges and service ‘bring forward’ costs can differ from area to area
- Capacity of the construction industry to meet demand, and the increasing costs associated with construction (due to increases in costs of materials and labour)
- Volume building designs, and their ability to respond to site conditions (particularly varying slope conditions)
- The impact of subdivision and lot design on the house design and affordability.
- Developer understanding of what the market (i.e. homebuyers and investors) are seeking.

The following sections highlight the influence of some of these factors exert over the housing market.
Figure 19: Land affected by slope
Slope

Slope is often cited as a key constraint on development, as the readily developable flat land is consumed.

Land affected by slope of 10 degrees or more becomes increasingly difficult and expensive to develop, often producing lower development yields, as larger lots are required to deliver an appropriate design response. In addition, housing designs can be substantially more expensive as volume housing products are not generally able to be built on sloping land, and architectural design responses are often required.

Approximately 27 per cent of the area of future residential land is impacted by significant slope comprising 5 major development sites.

During the Development plan review in July 2015, it was identified that a number of Development Plans placed density requirements on sloping land that are unlikely to be able to be met. The review identified that sloping land may be more suitable for larger lots, and thus, while not necessarily adhering to density or affordability objectives, served an important role in providing choice in the housing market, particularly for those people seeking larger lots with high amenity values (usually at higher price points).

Wodonga’s topographical landscape is dominant in areas such as Huon Hill and Bandiana, in estates such as Meridian and Riverside, the Neighbourhood Character Analysis acknowledged slope responsive design on sloping land to be important to maintaining distinct landscape character and creating diverse, appropriate housing outcomes. The study suggested the formation of subdivision and housing design guidelines to manage slope responsive design outcomes. Some of the basic guidelines to be considered include: encouraging split level dwellings, ensuring roads align with topography, use of pitched roofs etc.

The preparation and implementation of subdivision and housing design guidelines form part of Action 1.7 in this strategy as means of addressing neighbourhood character outcomes and contributing to diverse and site responsive housing outcomes.

Land ownership

Land fragmentation is a constraint to supply in housing markets that rely on greenfield development for a substantial proportion of their supply. However, this is not the case for Wodonga, whereby a large proportion of zoned land supply is held by a relatively small number of landholders.

This situation sets the conditions for more holistic planning for new growth, and simplifies the planning and development process when dealing with a small number of landholders. However, it can also create the condition whereby land release can be controlled in a manner that does not prioritise affordability objectives. The tendency toward larger dwelling types and lot size in Wodonga potentially reflects such condition. It will be important to work collaboratively with these landholders to ensure high quality planning and development outcomes are achieved, whilst also offering diverse and affordable land and housing to market.
Infrastructure

The relative ease of delivering infrastructure considerably impacts the cost of development, and as a logical consequence, the relative affordability of housing, as these costs are passed onto the purchaser. In Wodonga, infrastructure delivery (drainage, electricity, gas, water, roads etc) has been relatively straightforward. However, as development fronts move further from trunk infrastructure and into sloping and elevated land, infrastructure provision may become more complex and costly, which may place upward pressure on lot prices. However, it is noted that while Wodonga is characterised by a surrounding network of hills, only approximately 8 per cent of developable land is expected to be constrained by elevation (i.e. where it cannot be reasonably serviced by water and sewer services).

In addition, as development moves into new growth areas, such as Leneva-Baranduda, it will no longer be possible for development to rely on existing infrastructure to meet the needs of the emerging communities. As such, it is likely that council will require developers to contribute to the cost of additional community, open space, drainage and transport infrastructure (via Development or Infrastructure Contribution charges). While at first glance these charges may suggest upward pressure on prices (as historically council has relied on Section 173 agreements to secure infrastructure improvements however this occurred on an ad hoc basis only), they are also critical at mitigating the risks and costs delays associated with provision of catalyst infrastructure in new growth areas.

A legacy of multiple growth fronts has led to a lack of efficiency in public transport provision. Ongoing advocacy for a network review will be important to increase network efficiency and useability.

As renewable energy is increasingly utilised, there will be increased importance of collaborating with servicing authorities to future proof electrical distribution infrastructure, to ensure infrastructure capacity issues, in particular, electrical switchyards are addressed. Proactive precinct and subdivision design in consultation with service providers will assist in the facilitation of new and emerging technologies including micro-grids and battery storage.
Community Expectations

Feedback from the Wodonga community during forums held in 2016 identify the following main objectives with regard to expectations for their City:

- Making Wodonga a sustainable, affordable and family-centred city that enjoys a high quality of life;
- Ensuring Wodonga remains an affordable option for everyone;
- Addressing the social demands being placed on some parts of our community
- Wodonga – a community that cares

These sentiments demonstrate that there is an expectation in the community that the council will intervene in the housing market, where appropriate, to ensure that all people have access to housing which is affordable.

However, while housing affordability is certainly a concern of the community, housing is also an investment class, with the general expectation that an investment in homeownership will increase in value over time.

Regulation and Financial Systems

In many cases regulation, taxation and financial systems have a greater influence on housing affordability than the other aspects discussed in this strategy, and is not something the council can influence. For example, Federal tax structures favour homeowners and property investors, which can change people’s perception and choice of housing. For example, rather than viewing housing as a basic human need and core component of a community, it is viewed and selected based on its long-term investment potential (i.e. while a single bedroom dwelling might be all that’s needed, there tends to be lower demand based on a perception of limited resale value).

Recent changes as part of the Victoria Government’s housing affordability package, have introduced stamp duty discounts, and additional grants for first homebuyers in regional areas. These grants are similar across Victoria and NSW, and as such, do not generate a significant difference in the attractiveness of Wodonga relative to Albury for first home buyers. However, the Victorian grant does place greater incentives on building new homes, and may contribute to increasing demand for greenfield housing.

Financial systems also favour traditional models of housing ownership and construction methodologies. While there are emerging recognised models for financing alternative forms of housing (i.e. shared equity models, and financial instruments that finance non-traditional construction methods such prefabrication), these are not yet common, and their terms and conditions can create barriers to delivery of innovative and alternative housing and tenure types.
**Context**

It is projected that, as the population of Wodonga grows, that there will be a need for an additional 331 dwellings per annum.

Ensuring adequate supply of zoned land is a key component of ensuring that housing affordability is maintained through a steady pipeline of land and development to meet this need. Adequate supply ensures that there is competition in the housing market, putting downward pressure on prices. While supply plays an important role, it is recognised that it is just one aspect of a complex, interrelated process influencing the affordability of housing.

As noted in this Strategy and the Wodonga Growth Strategy, Wodonga has ample supply of zoned land to meet its population projections. Land is also earmarked for future zoning, particularly in the longer-term Leneva-Baranduda Growth Area, that is currently subject to a Precinct Structure Planning process in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority (VPA).

**Key Issues Summary**

Despite the ample land supply, there remain a few key issues that affect delivery of supply to market, including:

- Complex planning processes and lack of transparency and certainty in decision making.
- Lack of supply of readily developable land – remaining land in growth areas (other than Leneva-Baranduda) will increasingly be affected by slope, vegetation and other land constraints, or have infrastructure servicing constraints.
- Development Contributions and other charges on development can influence cost of development in different areas.
- Local land market controlled by a limited number of land developers, and there is a perception that there may be some restriction of supply to control prices.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Land Supply Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>Prioritise finalisation, in partnership with the Victorian Planning Authority, of the Leneva-Baranduda Precinct Structure Plan and Development Contributions Plan to unlock additional flat land supply.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>Upon approval of the Leneva-Baranduda Precinct Structure Plan (PSP) and Development Contributions Plan (DCP), prepare a clear implementation plan for delivery of infrastructure identified in the DCP, prioritising works in kind agreements with developers that maximise the efficiency of development levies and unlock land supply.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with landholders of key parcels (both greenfield sites within or outside of the PSP area) to facilitate delivery of lot supply to market.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with service authorities and VicRoads to proactively anticipate servicing constraints and high order infrastructure needs which may impact on development within greenfield growth fronts.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate – ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>Collaborate with North East Water to identify elevational constraints to infrastructure delivery, and to identify potential solutions that will enable development to proceed.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with local electricity distributors to future proof electrical distribution infrastructure to support increased take up renewable energy including solar photovoltaic and battery storage technology. This could include investigation of precinct or subdivision level planning of electrical distribution infrastructure.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 1.7 | Develop a specific policy for development on sloping land that is informed by an economic analysis, that does the following:  
  - Include subdivision design guidelines that facilitates delivery of slope sensitive road alignments and block sizes  
  - Includes housing design guidelines for preferred housing forms that avoid extensive site cuts (for example split level dwellings, pole mounted dwellings), and meet the environmental sustainability objectives. | Planning and Policy | Council responsibility | High | Immediate   |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Land Supply Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>Implement the subdivision and housing design guidelines through revised DPOs or new policy tools, such as Environmental Significant Overlay, and use of restrictions on title on land affected by 10 degree slope.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>Undertake training of council staff to take a leadership role to assist landholders, developers and builders when discussing and assessing development of sloping land.</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>Investigate the development of an Albury-Wodonga land monitor for monitoring of cross border land supply.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>Liaise with financial institutions to understand financial restrictions and blockages which may restrict land supply.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 2: To deliver best practice and consistency in the development approvals process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Objective 2.1</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Review internal development approvals processes with the aim of developing process that does the following:</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>Develop a specialised internal development approvals process that prioritises and includes development proposals that demonstrate commitment to and excellence in design, density, diversity, and affordability initiatives.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>Ensure consistent and transparent dialogue is maintained between Local Government and the development industry across multiple communication channels.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>Undertake comprehensive review of DDOs and DPOs to reduce complexity of planning controls and streamline approval processes.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5</td>
<td>Undertake comprehensive review of DDOs and DPOs to reduce complexity of planning controls and streamline approval processes.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>Ensure there are adequate resources (staff, access to technical advice, etc.) to manage development approvals and strategic planning workloads.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Context

Current planning approaches tend to apply similar objectives relating to housing density, diversity and affordability to all land, regardless of its existing or planned site conditions. This strategy seeks to acknowledge that some land (for example sloping land) will be inherently more difficult and expensive to develop, and as such, will require different design responses.

A key strength of the Wodonga housing market is the availability of choice of a range of housing in terms of location, price point and block size. This remains one of Wodonga’s key competitive advantages as a regional city, providing opportunity for housing affordability, but also providing opportunities for those people seeking higher value land and housing (sloping land provides an excellent opportunity to cater to this market). Key to this strength is Wodonga’s multiple greenfield development fronts.

While affordability is a key objective of this strategy, it is also recognised that higher land values in parts of the municipality provide opportunities for increased investment in housing. As the market matures, investment in areas and housing forms that have not traditionally been viable (such as apartments and multi-unit developments) will become more likely.

Key Issues

Multiple development fronts provide choice of land in greenfield areas, however, the abundance of greenfield land supply, and choice of price point can limit the viability of development of infill and strategic redevelopment site projects, which are important to delivering housing diversity in close proximity of services.

In greenfield contexts, a standard planning principle has been to maximise density in high amenity locations (such as surrounding open space areas). However, high amenity locations also draw higher prices, and as such, a policy to increase density in these locations may not have the desired effect.

This housing strategy acknowledges that density and diversity in the housing market will occur over time via a combination of proactive land use planning actions, government leadership, and market readiness. As such, the focus is on providing choice of land within a range of sub-markets, from affordable (both smaller and larger but usually smaller, flatter lots) to more higher-end lot types (usually larger lots in high amenity locations, or on sloping land).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Choice of Land Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Objective 3</td>
<td>To deliberately maintain, support and encourage Wodonga’s multiple greenfield growth fronts to provide a choice of housing location, price point and block size.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>In Leneva-Baranduda, proactively support multiple growth fronts, including consideration of self-funded ‘out of sequence’ development, in consultation with service authorities, where it can be demonstrated that it will result in a net community benefit (either by bringing forward delivery of needed infrastructure or unlocking opportunities for innovative outcomes).</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>Actively promote differences in greenfield housing market types in greenfield growth areas (including Leneva-Baranduda) by adopting a flexible density target within development plans and precinct structure plans (i.e. ensure any density targets take into consideration site specific conditions such as topography, staging of development and market readiness etc), and review the target periodically.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>Actively work with North East Water to identify opportunities to develop a strategic approach to servicing Bonegilla Township Zone with reticulated water and sewer infrastructure; and the Bonegilla Rural Living Zone with reticulated water infrastructure.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 4</td>
<td>To cater to a range of housing sub-markets, with blocks provided at a number of price points.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Conduct capacity building program for council officers to develop skills to better understand the different land conditions that will have influence on its ability to meet density, diversity and affordability objectives.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Review current Development Plan requirements relating to density on sloping lots, and consider relaxing density requirements to facilitate larger lot sizes that may be suitable for the higher end of the housing market.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Support delivery of smaller lots within proximity to, if not immediately adjacent, high amenity locations (such as open space) in order to maximise their affordability.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 5</td>
<td>To preserve and promote opportunities to deliver additional housing choice for infill, strategic infill development areas and strategic development sites (refer to Figure 34) as the market matures.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>Support the delivery of higher density housing development within infill in and around activity centres areas by adopting a flexible density target which takes into consideration site specific conditions.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>Apply the Residential Growth Zone in areas identified as appropriate for higher density development. See Part F Implementation for further details and assessment of applying the Residential Growth Zone.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Choice of Land Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>Support consolidation of sites within the City core (the established neighbourhoods surrounding the Central Business Area) and promote their development for diverse and higher density housing outcomes</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate-ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>Prepare and distribute marketing material (such as information brochures) to promote key strategic development sites, strategic infill development areas (refer to Figure 34) and development opportunities within Wodonga</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.5</td>
<td>Develop and maintain a database of landholders, developers, investors, and consultants interested in development opportunities within infill, strategic infill development areas and strategic development sites</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term-ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Context**

A diverse housing stock contributes to strategic objectives relating to affordability and adaptability by providing choice for people, as their household and lifestyle needs change.

While traditionally the predominant form of housing has been detached housing of 3 or more bedrooms, as Wodonga’s population grows, its household composition is projected to change. More lone and two person households are expected, but also a large cohort of younger people are expected to move into the ‘homebuilder’ age bracket in the next 5-10 years.

To meet changing needs, and to provide appropriate and affordable housing options for all members of Wodonga’s community there is a need to encourage and facilitate diversity in:

- Type of housing (detached, semi-detached, unit)
- Dwelling size (floor area, number of bedrooms)
- Lot size (conventional density, medium density)
- Tenure (home ownership/rental)

**Key Issues**

Housing diversity to meet different household and lifestyle needs makes intuitive sense, however, there are a range of factors that contribute to a lower diversity of housing stock:

- Relative affordability of Wodonga and lifestyle factors appear to be directing preferences (demand) to larger houses, despite small household size
- Limited interest from local land developers and volume builders to develop diverse housing types
- Additional costs associated with building larger homes are low, incentivising larger homes for resell value, rather than need

Development of attached/semi-detached housing in greenfield growth areas brings a range of complex planning and construction co-ordination challenges that disincentivises these housing forms and often makes them relatively more expensive than larger, detached housing. For example, housing on smaller lots, or multi-unit development on a lot requires a planning permit (which can be costly and time consuming), whereas single dwellings on a lot does not. Also, housing with shared walls or other shared facilities require coordination in sales and construction programming. These complicating factors are not outweighed by market pricing structures, and as such, are usually avoided by developers.

- Council can play only a limited role, other than via advocacy and education, in facilitating a diversity of tenure types.
- Finance requirements of banks create barriers to delivery of innovative and alternative housing and tenure types, such as co-housing.

Given the above, the priority is to preserve the opportunity for diverse housing outcomes, whilst seeking to stimulate and support any innovative proposals that emerge that demonstrate a commitment and excellence to density, diversity and affordability.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diversity Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 6</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>To take a council-wide proactive approach to the development industry and delivery of new and diverse housing to market.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>6.1</td>
<td>Encourage delivery of alternative housing models that will assist housing diversity, such as co-housing, eco villages, tiny houses by facilitating process and assisting with planning and regulatory issues where possible.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.2</td>
<td>Improve the capacity of council planners and other departments to develop a rapport with the development industry, and encourage officers to seek facilitation where possible to achieve positive outcomes.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>Develop a scheme for developers to make contributions toward a Housing Diversity Fund (e.g. through S173 voluntary agreements), with money to be used for research and/or investment in select projects that demonstrate alternative housing diversity outcomes.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.4</td>
<td>Consider financial incentives (such as deferring council rates during the development phase or consideration of sliding scale of contributions in future development contributions plans to incentivise small lots) to developers of projects that seeks to deliver innovative, diverse or affordable housing outcomes.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.5</td>
<td>Regularly engage with developers and builders to facilitate cross sector discussion of emerging housing needs and to work collaboratively to identify strategic market responses (in both subdivision and built form).</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.6</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with developers and builders to understand the extent to which capacity issues within the construction industry may be impacting the rate of development and subsequent lot prices, and work to identify strategic responses.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 7</strong>&lt;br&gt;<strong>To encourage a diversity of lot sizes and housing types in greenfield development.</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.1</td>
<td>Acknowledge that density will occur over time as the market matures, and support the delivery of diversity of lot sizes and housing types in planning policy by adopting a flexible density target that responds primarily to site conditions, access to facilities and infrastructure and amenity.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.2</td>
<td>Support delivery of diversity in housing forms as a priority objective within greenfield development by adopting flexible density targets.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3</td>
<td>Continue to encourage a diversity of lot sizes and housing forms in negotiation with developers and builders by preparing an information sheet, with specific examples, on what constitutes diverse housing in greenfield development.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Diversity Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with developers and builders to identify constraints to delivery of different housing types in greenfield growth areas (i.e. Semi-detached housing such as duplexes and townhouses).</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.5</td>
<td>Investigate possible planning and design tools (for example design guidelines, use of building envelopes, Small Lot Housing Code) to provide a balance between certainty and flexibility for small lot and semi-attached housing forms.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.6</td>
<td>Prepare a local policy (or include appropriate requirements and guidelines in Precinct Structure Plans) that encourages allocation of superlots for future medium density housing in greenfield growth areas in suitable locations in proximity to activity centres, community services and transport infrastructure to enable housing diversity to develop over time, as the market matures.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>Support development of larger lots where land is constrained by slope, to provide an alternative lifestyle choice at the higher end of the market.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 8**

To encourage housing to change over time to meet changing housing needs and emerging market opportunities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Diversity Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>Acknowledge density targets in greenfield areas are to be met over time, and promote diversity of lot sizes and housing products by adopting a flexible density target (which takes into account site specific conditions), and review the target periodically.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.2</td>
<td>Support infill development that provides for different housing types than standard detached housing, having regard to the preferred character of the neighbourhood as identified in the Neighbourhood Character Analysis.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3</td>
<td>Support higher density infill development at suitable locations to include a proportion of single and two bedroom dwellings.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.4</td>
<td>Encourage incremental intensification within the core area of Wodonga (where it is characterised by larger lot sizes, older housing stock and wide streetscapes). See Part F Implementation for proposed planning approaches.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.5</td>
<td>Investigate opportunities for council to collaborate with developers to facilitate delivery of alternative housing types that would not otherwise be viable without government intervention.</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
<td>Council Collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.6</td>
<td>Expand Wodonga’s land monitor <em>Land Development Trends</em> to collect data on lot size, number of bedrooms and proportion of dwellings on small lots by household composition. This will provide for monitoring and reporting on whether the changing housing needs are met by the housing market.</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Council Responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Diversity Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----</td>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------</td>
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<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.1</td>
<td>Recognise the importance of retirement accommodation in both greenfield and established areas and support the diversified provision of suitable lot sizes and housing forms to cater for the demand.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.2</td>
<td>Encourage developments of new aged care and retirement villages to step away from the gated community approach which challenges standard planning principles relating to connectivity and neighbourhood integration. Promote the benefits of connectivity and neighbourhood integration on the health and well-being of the elderly.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3</td>
<td>Proactively work with the development industry to encourage and facilitate market interest in retirement living and aged care.</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4</td>
<td>Monitor the introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in respect to the delivery of affordable housing for people with a disability.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.5</td>
<td>Prepare an information sheet that can be used to educate council planners and developers/builders about the benefits of adaptable housing designs that enable people to ‘age in place’.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>Continue to develop council planning and building staff and developers’ skills with regard to access issues and the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1992 (DDA).</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART C

AFFORDABLE
HOUSING
Affordable housing is defined as housing that is appropriate for very low, low and moderate-income households. It is distinct from ‘housing affordability’ which is a wider issue addressed more broadly in this strategy.

The provision of safe, secure affordable housing is essential to people’s lives, and has a range of social and economic benefits for Wodonga.

The need for affordable housing in the Wodonga area has been categorised as ‘high need or demand’ that is expected to persist or worsen, demonstrated by evidence that:

- 25.7 per cent of Wodonga households are low income, earning less than $494 per week ($25,688 per annum)\(^1\);
- 1389 low income renter households (earning less than $650 per week) are in housing stress\(^2\);
- 397 households were seeking public housing in the Ovens Murray (Wodonga) region as at March 2018, 152 of whom required priority assistance\(^3\);
- 2017 individuals sought assistance from homelessness service providers between 2012 and 2014\(^4\);
- Rental affordability for all dwellings has declined from 63.7 per cent in 2000 to 56 per cent in 2017\(^5\);
- In 2017, 44 per cent of all dwellings made available to rent in the market and 81.1 per cent of one-bedroom lettings were not affordable for very low income households;
- 1816 low income households were in housing stress (paying more than 30 per cent of income on housing costs), representing 12 per cent of all households, compared to a regional Victorian average of 10.5 per cent of low income households\(^6\);
- Median house prices increased by 32.29 per cent from 2007 to 2017\(^7\); and,
- There is a significant level of unmet need for smaller dwellings with only 2 per cent of dwellings comprising of one bedroom. A lack of smaller dwellings with corresponding lower rental or purchase prices impact on affordability outcomes, particularly for older households.

The evidence and the complexity of the issues requires action by a range of stakeholders, including Federal, State and Local Governments to:

- Continue to improve housing affordability to benefit all households;
- Increase the supply of affordable housing appropriate and available for lower income households; and,
- Support residents to sustain appropriate housing outcomes and not fall into housing stress or homelessness.

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\(^1\) Id community (2018) Community Profile: equivalised household income, Wodonga 2016
\(^2\) Id community (2018) Social Atlas, Rental Stress (low income households), Wodonga 2016
\(^3\) DHHS (2018) Victorian Housing Register and Waiting List, March 2018
\(^4\) La Trobe University (2016) Housing Affordability and Homelessness in the Hume Region – Victoria
\(^5\) DHHS Rental Report (2018) Time Series, average rental affordability over year
\(^6\) Id Community, Social Atlas, Housing Stress, Wodonga 2016
AFFORDABLE HOUSING VISION

VISION

People on lower incomes and vulnerable households can access housing that is affordable, appropriate and have security of tenure.

AIMS

1. Reduced incidence of homelessness;
2. Increased supply of quality affordable housing available for lower income households to access; and
3. Improved access to tailored affordable housing outcomes for vulnerable low income households.

ACTION PLAN

Leadership, Advocacy and Partnership
Capacity Building
Planning and Policy
Monitoring
Key actions that respond to the vision, aims and objectives have been identified that reflect the scope and capacity of Local Government, particularly as planning and responsible authority and community facilitator.

- Work in partnership with key stakeholders to improve local knowledge and develop new solutions to address homelessness and increase the supply of affordable housing.

- Identify strategic and surplus government owned sites suitable for residential use and advocate to Federal and State Governments for appropriate land release with an affordable housing and related infrastructure requirements.

- Undertake further investigations into affordable housing need and potential council-led responses to support highly vulnerable household groups with other support needs.

- Progress the facilitation of key partnerships across the industry and not-for-profit sector to explore and develop innovative development and financial responses to the problem, including investigating demonstration projects on government land and short and long-term subdivision of large public housing sites.
What Do We Mean by Affordable Housing?

It is important to note that while closely linked, there is a difference between housing affordability and affordable housing. As a result, there may be variations in how council will work towards addressing each issue.

Housing affordability is a complex and critical issue impacting on an areas’ growth and people’s access to housing that is within their financial means:

- Affordability is impacted by many factors, including population and demographic trends, land supply, access to and cost of financing, labour and material markets, and financial and property trends (both internationally and locally);
- Dwelling size and diversity of housing types and tenures impact on the cost and affordability of housing;
- Policies and actions taken by all levels of government influence housing affordability, including taxation, income support, planning, land use and funding and financial decisions;
- Broader affordable living objectives are also important to an assessment of housing affordability, including the location of housing relative to services and jobs, and environmental performance of the dwelling and relationship to running costs.

Affordable housing is a specific term that is used when referring to dedicated housing for very low, low and moderate income households, primarily households unable, or struggling, to participate in the private market:

- Affordable housing targeted to lower income households typically depends largely on government intervention and financial support, depending on the gap between a household’s income capacity or not-for-profit housing agencies financial capacity and house prices;
- While actions towards maintaining housing affordability across the market are critical to sustaining lower price points and thereby reducing the need for dedicated affordable housing, they may not directly result in housing options being available at an appropriate price point for lower income households to afford;
- There is also no guarantee lower priced housing in the private market is able to be accessed by lower income households;
- Specific actions are therefore required to be developed and appropriately financed to deliver affordable housing.

Affordable living is also a broad concept, linked to affordability, that takes a wider perspective as to the costs of housing recognising there are a range of associated costs such as cost of transport and running costs that impact on the affordability of a housing outcome for a household. Detailed sustainability objectives and actions that relate to affordable housing are addressed in the sustainability chapter.
The primary types of affordable housing that are delivered in Victoria include:

- **Supported and transitional housing**: housing targeted to very vulnerable households, often people exiting homelessness or with other complex needs that is typically coupled with a range of wrap-around personal supports;

- **Public housing**: housing that is owned and managed by the State Government and managed by the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS);

- **Community housing**: housing that is owned and/or managed by not-for-profit organisations. Community housing organisations are generally regulated by Government;

- **Social housing**: umbrella term to describe public and community housing;

- **Affordable home ownership**: dedicated affordable home ownership programs include shared equity arrangements which can be supported by Governments or not-for-profit organisations.

The Victorian Government has recently published income bands for households that are deemed to be eligible for affordable housing that is delivered under the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

### Table 5: Incomes bands (Rest of State) *(Planning and Environment Act 1987, Section 3AB Specification of Income Ranges, May 29, 2018)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Household type</th>
<th>Very low</th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Single adult</td>
<td>Up to $18,380</td>
<td>$18,381 - $29,400</td>
<td>$29,401 - $44,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couple, no dependent children</td>
<td>Up to $27,560</td>
<td>$27,561 - $44,100</td>
<td>$44,101 - $66,160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family (1-2 adults with dependent children)</td>
<td>Up to $38,590</td>
<td>$38,591 - $61,750</td>
<td>$61,751 - $92,610</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Federal Government

The National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) is the key Federal – State policy agreement concerning housing affordability and affordable housing delivery, and sets a range of shared objectives to improve both rental and ownership outcomes particularly for lower income households. The NAHA results in significant Commonwealth investment to the States, with large proportions directed towards maintaining and improving existing public housing.

Significant investment is also made by the Commonwealth directly to households in the form of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA). CRA is not a supply subsidy and many households remain in housing stress despite this additional financial support.

State Government

The State Government Housing Strategy ‘Homes for Victorians’ is a significant policy and investment intervention with a number of key strategies of particular relevance to Wodonga, including:

- $1 billion Social Housing Growth Fund to support new social housing construction or subsidise private rental outcomes;
- $1 billion loan guarantee program to help Housing Associations secure more competitive commercial finance;
- $100 million revolving loan facility which will increase the pool of capital available for Housing Associations;
- Transfer of the management of 4,000 units of public housing to the community housing sector;
- Release of surplus government land to the market with an affordable housing requirement;
- Establishment of a voluntary planning framework to provide greater certainty as to the circumstances and affordable housing outcomes that could be supported on privately owned land;
- Additional financial support for First Home Buyers including removal of Stamp Duty for properties under $600,000 and an increase in the First Home Owners Grant in regional Victoria; and
- Commitment to shared-equity home ownership programs.
The recent update to Plan Melbourne sets a revised 35-year blueprint to ensure Melbourne grows more sustainable, productive and liveable. A five-year implementation plan sets out key actions that need to be taken by State and Local Governments. Of particular relevance are directions to:

- Manage the supply of new housing in the right locations to meet population growth and create a sustainable city;
- Increase the supply of social and affordable housing;
- Provide greater choice and diversity of housing;
- Invest in regional Victoria to support housing and economic growth; and
- Improve connections between cities and regions.

The Government’s Regional Statement and Regional Partnership Program also focuses on progressing a wide range of economic and social requirements in regional areas.

As of June 1, 2018 there is a stronger legislative basis and obligation for local councils to consider affordable housing in the planning process as a result of the following changes incorporated into the Planning and Environment Act.

- New objective of planning; “to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria”
- Definition of affordable housing
- Statement confirming that a Responsible Authority may enter a Section 173 Agreement with a land owner to secure an affordable housing agreement

These new provisions are supported by Government Gazetted Orders and State Government Guidance that provides further clarity on the definition of affordable housing and its translation, and a framework to support greater voluntary negotiations between local councils and land owners.
KEY CONSTRAINTS

There are a range of key constraints impacting on the supply of affordable housing in a community.

Australia has always had a relatively low proportion of social housing compared to many other developed nations, with an emphasis on home ownership traditionally supplied through market mechanisms. Since the early 2000s there has been a trend away from home ownership as incomes have not kept pace with house prices.

At the same time, parts of Australia have experienced rapid population growth, ageing population and a growth in the number of smaller households, all creating new challenges for the type of housing that is required.

Changes in public housing policy from the 1980s included an increased targeting of limited public housing stock to households on very low incomes with other needs and a reduction in investment into new supply. Over time this has resulted in a residualised public housing system that has not kept pace with demand.

A significant proportion of the total public housing stock requires refurbishment or redevelopment and is no longer appropriately sized to meet household needs.

At the same time the role of the community housing sector has been growing and increasingly able to bring new capital resources to support new housing supply and management options. As not-for-profit charities, these organisations are eligible for GST and Stamp Duty concessions, Commonwealth Rent Assistance via tenants, and have the capacity to charge slightly higher rents than public housing (30 per cent of income, up to a maximum 74.9 per cent market rent), which in turn supports debt to service financing of new supply.

As with the public housing system, the financial capacity of community housing agencies to meet market value costs are also constrained by the below-market rents that are charged.

The following key demand and supply issues are noted to impact on the supply of affordable housing in the Wodonga region:

**Demand**

- High demand for social housing by single and two-person households;
- The limited income capacity and housing options for young people is a significant issue. It is noted that even if public housing is available, the costs of living can be higher than income provides, increasing their chances of falling into housing stress and being unable to maintain a tenancy.
- Limited funding for wrap-around support services for vulnerable households, particularly for younger people, women and children escaping domestic violence and older men with complex needs; and
- Local emergency housing services are not meeting demand, and levels of homelessness were noted to be on the rise.
Supply

- Tightly held land development market with limited competition and a standard approach to house and land delivery. Little incentive to decrease housing sizes, with step-up in price from three to four bedrooms now making four bedrooms a preferred market choice.

- General lack of one and two bedroom dwellings being delivered across the market resulting in limited affordable private rental of this size and reduced opportunities for housing associations to purchase smaller dwellings.

- Public housing is predominantly free-standing larger dwellings on larger lots, with significant under occupancy.

- Limited exit options from transitional housing into long term housing. Lack of small public housing dwellings is noted to exacerbate the problem.

- Challenges in finding suitably sized and located properties for older single women with rooming house accommodation generally not considered appropriate.

- The availability of relatively affordable land in greenfield locations and high levels of car dependence reduce the incentive of urban infill redevelopment to developers, noting that these types of development often come with additional costs.
Private Rental

Trends in private rental market supply and affordability are significant as it is the predominant housing tenure that lower income households access.

In 2016, 27.5 per cent of all households in Wodonga were renting in the private market, significantly higher than the Regional Victoria average of 19.8 per cent and Victoria (24.9 per cent).\(^1\)

Between 2011 and 2016 there was a 21.8 per cent five-year change in the number of private rentals recorded.\(^2\)

1,389 low income renter households were estimated to be in housing stress in 2016, representing 27 per cent of all renter households.\(^3\)

Key figures are highlighted below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March 2017</th>
<th>June 2017</th>
<th>September 2017</th>
<th>December 2017</th>
<th>2017 Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
<td><strong>Median</strong></td>
<td><strong>Count</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 BR Flat</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>$175</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 BR Flat</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>$230</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>$230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 BR Flat</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$280</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>$280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 BR House</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>$263</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>$240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 BR House</td>
<td>172</td>
<td>$310</td>
<td>153</td>
<td>$310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 BR House</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>$380</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>$380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>All properties</strong></td>
<td><strong>410</strong></td>
<td><strong>$310</strong></td>
<td><strong>367</strong></td>
<td><strong>$290</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6: Median Rent by dwelling type, Wodonga - 2017 (Source: DHHS Rental Report Time Series)

56.03 per cent of all dwellings made available for rent in 2017 were considered affordable for a household on a statutory (government) income (Table 7), compared to the state average of 15.03 per cent and a non-metro average of 42.08 per cent.\(^4\)

This is lower than other regional cities including Wangaratta (72.55 per cent), Swan Hill (79.15 per cent) and Greater Shepparton (66.55 per cent).\(^5\)

Of note, in Wodonga in 2017:

- 43.97 per cent of all new lettings were not affordable for lower income households (see Table 7);
- Wangaratta (72.55 per cent), Swan Hill (79.15 per cent) and Greater Shepparton (66.55 per cent);\(^6\) and,
- Lower cost dwellings are often rented by higher income households.

1. idcommunity (2018) Community Profile - Wodonga
2. idcommunity (2018) Community Profile - Wodonga
4. DHHS (2018) Affordable Lettings by LGA, March quarter 2018
5. DHHS (2018) Affordable lettings by LGA, March 2018 quarter
### Table 7: Number and Percentage of new lettings assessed as affordable for very low income households, Wodonga LGA, June 2017

Changes in the number and percentage of all new lettings dwellings that were affordable over time, illustrated in figures 22, 23 and 24 highlight an overall decline in private rental affordability from 84 per cent of new lettings in December 2000 to 52.4 per cent in December 2017 quarter.

**Figure 22: Number and Percentage of private rental dwellings affordable for very-low income household, Wodonga, Dec 2000 – Dec 2017 quarter trends**
This trend is particularly stark for one-bedroom dwellings, indicating that as supply of smaller dwellings hasn’t kept pace with demand, rents have increased.

![Graph showing number and percentage of new affordable private rental lettings (1 Bedroom), Wodonga, Dec 2000 – Dec 2017 quarter trends](image)

*Figure 23: Number and percentage of new affordable private rental dwellings (1 Bedroom), Wodonga, Dec 2000 – Dec 2017 quarter trends*

Fairly consistent supply of two-bedroom dwellings in the market appears to have partly mitigated the trend for two-bedroom properties, although a drop in supply between December 2015 and June 2017 quarters is noted.

![Graph showing number and percentage of new affordable private rental lettings (2 Bedroom), Dec 2000 - Dec 2017 quarter trends](image)

*Figure 24: Number and Percentage new affordable private rental lettings (2 Bedroom), Dec 2000 - Dec 2017 quarter trends*
The social housing system is the only form of housing that is guaranteed to be rented to lower income households at an affordable price point. If there is insufficient affordable housing people may be forced to make sacrifices to living standards or safety to sustain private housing, or they may find themselves homeless. This section provides a summary and analysis of the data concerning homelessness and the supply and demand of dedicated social housing and highlights key challenges facing the social housing system.

Homelessness

The demand for affordable housing is starkly demonstrated by the number of people that are homeless, or at risk of homelessness and seeking housing assistance in the region. 213 persons were estimated to be homeless in the Wodonga – Alpine region in 2016; the highest number in Hume region (Table 8 on the next page). A further 21 persons were in other marginal housing. This is a small decline from the estimated 228 persons that were estimated to be homeless in 2011.

Over a three-year period (2012 and 2014), 2017 individual clients who identified Wodonga as their primary place of residence sought assistance from homelessness service providers, totalling 3104 support periods, or an average 1034 support periods a year.

Of these presentations 1984 were new clients of the service provider and 1083 were existing clients, and:

- 72 per cent relied on government support as their primary source of income;
- 11.7 per cent identified as Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander;
- 23 per cent had children in their care;
- 22 per cent were unemployed and between the ages of 22 and 65; and,
- 11 per cent had a recognised disability.

The majority of presentations were by single-parents with child(ren), followed by lone-persons. 62 per cent of all presentations across the Hume Region during the same period were by women and 18.4 per cent of individuals had a prior mental health diagnosis.

Of the 2017 presentations for assistance, in the week prior to seeking assistance the majority were notably not homeless but considered to be at risk. 8.63 per cent were sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation and 27.48 per cent were in short-term or emergency accommodation.

9.22 per cent had been sleeping rough or in non-conventional accommodation 12 months prior to seeking assistance, highlighting homelessness is a long-term issue for many individuals.

The primary reason people gave for seeking assistance was “housing crisis” and “financial difficulties”, followed closely by “inadequate or inappropriate dwelling conditions”. Domestic and family violence and relationship/family breakdown was also a common reason for presentation, although these figures are likely to be an undercount.

A detailed La Trobe University study concluded that Wodonga has an “established high (housing) need that is likely to persist or worsen given population growth projections.”
Social housing

Data on social housing (public and community housing) is critical to understanding affordable housing supply and demand as it is the only form of housing tenure that is dedicated to housing very-low income and vulnerable Victorians.

As at September 2015, there were 1453 social housing dwellings in Wodonga, of which 130 dwellings were community housing owned or managed.

Understanding the stock profile supports consideration as to whether existing stock is meeting demand or could be better utilised. It is noted:

- 56 per cent of social housing owned by DHHS is free-standing housing and 33 per cent medium-density attached, compared to 82 per cent detached housing across the market;
- bedroom sizes of DHHS properties are not publicly recorded, however are understood to be predominantly comprising three or more bedrooms;
- of the community housing dwellings in 2016, 87 are owned by Beyond Housing, 56 per of which are majority two-bedroom dwellings.

In the same period (September 2015), there were 452 households registered on the public housing waiting list for the Ovens-Murray area office, with 119 of these households assessed as requiring priority housing support.

15 per cent of all first presentations for housing assistance during 2012-2014 across the Hume region were from households residing in social housing, highlighting that even with dedicated affordable housing, people can be placed in housing stress due to other pressures on income.

Other forms of housing support provided in the area includes crisis and transitional accommodation. Programs are also in place to support people to maintain their housing including Rural Housing’s Social Housing Advocacy and Support Program (SHASP) which assists people living in social housing to keep their current home when they are at risk of losing their tenancy.


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HOMELSS OPERATIONAL GROUP</th>
<th>OTHER MARGINAL HOUSING</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Persons living in improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper Goulburn Valley</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wangaratta - Benalla</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wodonga - Alpine</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

56 per cent of social housing owned by DHHS is free-standing housing and 33 per cent medium-density attached, compared to 82 per cent detached housing across the market;
Further insights into housing affordability and the potential need for dedicated affordable housing can be identified through an assessment of the ‘affordability gap’; being the difference between the amount a household can afford to pay for housing and the actual cost of providing a typical housing unit in a particular location.”

A preliminary affordable gap analysis, set out in Attachment 2 highlights the following.

- There is a significant gap for very low-income single and two-person households to rent (noting the inclusion of Commonwealth Rent Assistance would reduce the rental affordability gap but even then, very low-income households may still be in housing stress).
- Home purchase is not a viable option for these households;
- Moderate income, single-person and two-person households are comfortably able to afford private rental and have capacity to purchase at median price points.
- Supply of dwellings at affordable rent and purchase prices are required if these households are to have an affordable option in the market.

The analysis also highlights that housing affordability is also an income issue, with those households unable to work and dependant on government income support most likely to require additional income or housing support.
INCLUSIONARY HOUSING PROGRAM

The Victorian Government’s housing strategy Home for Victorians commits to undertaking an Inclusionary Housing Pilot to deliver up to 100 new social housing homes in Victoria.

The program seeks to utilise surplus government land with good access to jobs and transport and establish partnerships with private sector developers and Community Housing providers to deliver new social housing homes.

Through the program, the Victorian Government provides planning certainty through the Fast Track Government Land Services and ensures the best value for money is provided through a competitive tendering process.

The Victorian Government will discount the price it receives for the land in return for a commitment to deliver a proportion of social housing on-site as part of the development.

PILOT SITE: WODONGA

Wodonga was one of six Victorian sites nominated by the Minister for Planning for The Inclusionary Housing Pilot Program.

The former Wodonga South Primary School situated at 30 Jarrah St and 41 Pearce St, Wodonga (the site) was determined surplus to the Victorian Government’s requirements and was recommended by the independent Victorian Government Land Standing Advisory Committee for proposed planning scheme changes.

Consultation was undertaken in late 2017 and finalised in January 2018. A second round of exhibition was required to exhibit further planning provisions. This period closed on December 11, 2017 with a public hearing on January 30, 2018.

Following adoption of appropriate zoning and planning controls, the site was put to market for residential development purposes.

The program provides an innovative public-private partnership model which will deliver an inclusive mix of social, affordable and private market housing close to jobs, transport and amenities.
Figure 20: Jarrah St site

The site

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Context
Specific targeted approaches are required to provide increased access to affordable housing (as defined by the Victorian Government) in Wodonga.

Key Issues
There are a range of key constraints to delivery of affordable housing in Wodonga that relate to demand and supply. These are summarised as follows.

Demand
► High demand for social housing by single and two-person households compared to limited smaller housing supply.
► The limited income capacity and housing options for young people is a significant issue.
► Limited funding for wrap-around tailored support services for vulnerable households.
► Local emergency housing services are not meeting demand, and levels of homelessness were noted to be on the rise.

Supply
► Tightly held land development market with little incentive to decrease housing sizes, with step-up in price from three to four bedrooms low now making four bedrooms a preferred market choice.
► General lack of one and two bedroom dwellings being delivered across the market resulting in limited affordable private rental of this size and reduced opportunities for housing associations to purchase smaller dwellings.
► Limited exit options from transitional housing into long term housing. Lack of small public housing dwellings is noted to exacerbate the problem.
► Challenges in finding suitably sized and located properties for older single women with rooming house accommodation generally not considered appropriate.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Affordable Housing Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>To increase supply of quality affordable housing available for lower (very low, low and moderate) income households.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>Develop a program to actively monitor supply of affordable housing within Wodonga to inform local advocacy efforts.</td>
<td>Monitoring</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.2</td>
<td>Develop a flexible density target (see action 5.1) to facilitate delivery of more one and two bedroom dwellings to meet identified local demand and improve choice.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>Undertake an audit of council owned land to identify surplus and underutilised sites suitable for residential use, specifically for affordable housing. (See also action 10.4)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.4</td>
<td>Based on the new section on affordable housing in the Planning and Environment Act and the use of voluntary agreements on affordable housing contributions, investigate a process and timeframe to assess identified council-owned sites to market.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.5</td>
<td>Advocate to the Victorian Government the potential to deliver quality smaller homes on underutilised public housing land, or on other government land in established areas close to activity centres.</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>Using the Victorian Government's voluntary planning guidance, develop a process for developers of major developments to enter into voluntary agreements to deliver affordable housing.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.7</td>
<td>Continue to support local stakeholder investigations into innovative land use, planning and financial models that could be developed and delivered to increase affordable housing.</td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.9</td>
<td>Undertake an assessment to identify how council can directly support the delivery of affordable housing, including identifying conditions required for council to give due consideration to any option and potential constraints. This could include the following.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Support during site identification phases to ascertain appropriateness of potential land for development.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Review of council’s fee waiver policy to provide waiver of planning and building fees for not-for-profit housing organisations.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Rate exemptions or discounts for not-for-profit housing organisations on the basis this foregone revenue would be directed into new affordable housing supply in the area.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The discounted sale or long-term lease of council land assets towards affordable housing.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Innovative public private partnership models.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Affordable Housing Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>10.10</td>
<td>Investigate the structure and take-up of the NSW State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 Ancillary (secondary) Dwelling provisions in NSW regional towns and their potential for application in Wodonga.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short - medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11</td>
<td>Based on the new section on affordable housing in the Planning and Environment Act, develop a local policy regarding affordable housing as a key priority in assessment of major developments on identified strategic sites. The policy should provide guidance on how Council will seek to use voluntary agreements as identified in Action 10.4, and Council's policy with regard to innovative forms of affordable housing on underutilised sites.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.12</td>
<td>Update council's strategic direction regarding the exceptional circumstances where council would support rezoning of non-urban land for residential purposes (Strategy 1.3 of the Wodonga Growth Strategy) to include affordable housing contributions as one of the criteria (in accordance with Section 3AA of the Planning and Environment Act). Develop a policy to establish the framework for voluntary contributions for affordable housing (see also action 10.11).</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 11**

To work towards improving affordable living through more sustainable, adaptable and well located housing which reduce cost of living

<p>| 11.1 | Undertake audits of preferred strategic sites for affordable housing developments which have good access to jobs, transport, amenities and services. | Monitoring             | Council responsibility       | High     | Ongoing         |
| 11.2 | Work collectively with relevant stakeholders to investigate the development and adoption of environmentally sustainable design measures for affordable housing projects to ensure lower running costs. | Planning and policy    | Council collaboration        | High     | Ongoing         |
| 11.3 | Work collectively with community housing stakeholders to investigate opportunities to encourage the adoption of adaptable housing designs. | Advocacy and Partnerships | Council collaboration       | Medium   | Short - medium-term |
| 11.4 | Work collectively with building stakeholders to investigate opportunities to promote an increase in smaller housing options in the market (see also action 5.1 on flexible density target). | Advocacy and Partnerships | Council collaboration       | High     | Ongoing         |
| 11.5 | Work collectively with stakeholders to attract funding for sustainable retrofits of public and affordable housing stock. | Capacity Building      | Council collaboration        | Medium   | Medium-term     |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Affordable Housing Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objective 12</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To lobby and advocate to other levels of government and stakeholders to improve affordable housing outcomes.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.1</td>
<td>Formalise regular engagement with key housing stakeholders to support:</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▸ Partnership development</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▸ Knowledge sharing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>▸ Opportunities to collectively attract funding from State government and philanthropic bodies.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>Advocate to Victorian Government to support development of a feasibility study for a Youth Foyer in Wodonga to provide accommodation for young people who are homeless or at risk and improve employment pathways.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>Continue to build on regional partnerships to share learnings, and to advocate through regional local council and business networks for State Government social and affordable housing growth and renewal funds to be allocated to regional areas.</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Capacity building</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>Engage with the Victorian Government and regional networks regarding regional housing market dynamics and opportunities to utilise the State-wide voluntary planning guidance in regional areas.</td>
<td>Advocacy and partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term -ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART D

QUALITY IN HOUSING
Wodonga’s character is defined by its natural landscape setting (for example, the hillside surrounding the existing residential areas and the wide Murray River floodplain) as well as a series of established neighbourhoods within the inner parts of the city that are characterised by a sense of space – small dwellings on larger lots, wide streets and garden plantings.

The main sphere of influence for Wodonga’s neighbourhood character is at land subdivision stage given the majority of Wodonga’s growth is occurring in existing and emerging growth areas. This forms the key basis of this strategy which is to bring Wodonga’s valued neighbourhood elements to emerging areas and enhance the preferred character in established areas and achieve the community’s desired neighbourhood outcomes.

The Neighbourhood Character Analysis (NCA) provides a detailed assessment of the qualitative aspects of Wodonga’s residential development and will play an important role in helping to maintain and enhance Wodonga’s competitive advantage. The role of the Wodonga NCA is to establish the existing character and identify the preferred character for Wodonga’s neighbourhoods. Implementation actions can then be identified accordingly to ensure that neighbourhood character is more effectively protected and enhanced to reflect the desired character and values of that community.

Neighbourhood Character addresses the housing tenets of choice, diversity and quality with regard to Wodonga’s housing affordability.

The NCA identifies 3 character types and 6 subtypes over 42 character precincts. The key elements defining each subtype is generally defined by era of development as this is a major distinguishing feature between each neighbourhood among other character and design elements such as street layout, setbacks, topography and vegetation.

Other components of neighbourhood character include settlement types and level of change.
Settlement Type

Refers to the forms of housing development within Wodonga, which include the following:

- **Infill** – incremental housing development occurring in existing neighbourhoods, often in the form of re-subdivision, development of individual sites or more significant redevelopment on larger, consolidated sites (refer to strategic development sites).

- **Low density, rural living and rural settlements** – incremental housing growth delivered in rural areas and small townships. This type of housing does not make up a large proportion of housing in the municipality but is part of the diverse housing options that are available.

- **Strategic development sites** – another form of infill development that occurs on larger or consolidated sites that have been identified as having capacity to support increased density residential development. These sites are typically vacant, underutilised or due for redevelopment. The *Wodonga Growth Strategy (2016)* has identified several strategic development sites within the CBA.

- **Greenfield Growth** – new development located on the urban fringe to the west, east and south of the city. Wodonga’s growth areas have traditionally been distributed around the city, a legacy of the AWDC’s involvement within Wodonga’s land market.

Level of Change

The NCA identified three main levels of change based on neighbourhood character and settlement types within Wodonga’s neighbourhoods.

- **Minimal change areas** – Refers to areas which are likely to experience very little change in the scale and type of development. These areas are identified as having heritage value and/or significant neighbourhood character and are thus not suitable for higher density development.

- **Natural change areas** – All other areas in Wodonga which have no significant development constraints. These areas are likely to experience incremental and modest change over time in the form of infill development.

- **Substantial change areas** – Areas capable of accommodating new developments either in the form of higher-density strategic development sites or strategic infill areas within established areas or in emerging greenfield growth areas.
What is neighbourhood character?

The concept of neighbourhood character can be difficult to define as it has varying meanings across a range of contexts. The Department of Environment, Land, Water and Planning (DELWP) defines neighbourhood character as:

“The combination of the public and private realms. Every property, public place or piece of infrastructure makes a contribution, whether great or small. It is the cumulative impact of all these contributions that establishes neighbourhood character.”

Based on this definition, a key component of neighbourhood character is understanding the relationship between attributes in the private and public domains. It is not simply a list of discrete elements or features it is the combination and interplay between them.

Neighbourhood character plays a key role in planning for the future of an area, and in particular, when assessing the suitability of permit applications for new development. It is the basis upon which to ensure that proposed residential developments respect its surrounding context in established areas, and in creating a positive character in newly developing areas.
What is neighbourhood character for Wodonga?

Neighbourhood character is reflected, valued and interpreted in a variety of ways as influenced by an array of historical factors (e.g. the influence of the AWDC), locational and physical elements as well as community values and attributes. Key influences on Wodonga’s neighbourhood character include its unique topography, which offers significant views of its surrounding hills, the wide open formal and rural streetscapes and green open spaces with various forms of landscaping, as well as Wodonga’s predominantly low-scale built form.

This section discusses these influencing factors by first highlighting two main objectives relating to Wodonga’s future neighbourhood character identified as a result of the review and analysis conducted within this report. These are:

1. Maintain and/or enhance preferred character in established areas undergoing incremental change.

2. Encourage and shape a preferred character in new growth areas that will contribute to the overall liveability character of Wodonga.

These two objectives distinguish between the main types of change occurring within Wodonga’s neighbourhoods, and thus seeks to respond to its established neighbourhoods (areas of infill development and incremental change) and emerging neighbourhoods (growth areas) with appropriate tools and mechanisms. These can be further broken down into the following development types:

- Infill: infill re-subdivision of lots, infill single dwelling, infill medium density within established areas
- Growth area: Growth area subdivision, growth area single dwelling, growth area medium density

It is important to note that growth areas, which are residential areas within greenfield sites have the most potential to affect Wodonga’s neighbourhood character as these areas will undergo substantial change from undeveloped land to residential land. Thus, it is important to ensure that these areas positively contribute to Wodonga’s key housing and neighbourhood objectives.

Identifying these development types should assist in assessing which planning tools and mechanisms may be most suitable for existing and future neighbourhoods of Wodonga, as will be explored in the section on statutory planning tools.
As one of Victoria's fastest-growing regional cities, Wodonga seeks to boost its competitive advantage. This involves protecting and enhancing elements which make Wodonga unique from metropolitan Melbourne as well as other regional cities.

While the concept of neighbourhood character may be similar across areas, their manifestations are distinctive. Thus, it is important to identify the relationships between the built form and the landscape features, within both public and private realms. In the case of Wodonga, existing valued elements and influences to neighbourhood character include but are not limited to:

- **Topography** - Wodonga's unique topography offers significant views to defining landscape features such as its surrounding hills (e.g. Huon Hill), thus influencing the built form and street design and layout to have respect to the landscape.

- **Street layout** - A key feature of the public realm. The street layout particularly in relation to landscape and topography is a key defining feature of a neighbourhood. Wodonga displays a variety of street layouts, from formal traditional to modified grid layouts around central Wodonga to curvilinear and cul-de-sac layouts in more recent developments as well as less formal street layouts within low density residential areas.

- **Vegetation** - Vegetation within public areas and on private property can have a significant influence on character, depending on type, species, size, spacing and location and contribute to biodiversity. Vegetation within Wodonga's neighbourhoods vary from informal landscaping within Felltimber and Valley Views to more formal street tree plantings in more recent subdivisions.

- **Built form** - Features such as building size, height, architectural style and materials (roofing, fencing and retaining walls), even garage and carport sizes can be important defining elements.

- **Interfaces and setbacks** - These influence relationship and transition between the varying public and private realms and uses. This is most relevant to corner lots within Wodonga, which have two facades to the street.

- **Uses, community facilities, services and transport nodes** - Types and proximity to these can generally influence the character of an area, particularly when considering the future preferred character. Wodonga features a hierarchy of neighbourhood activity nodes, strategically distributed around the municipality, from the major activity centre in Wodonga's Central Business Area (CBA) to supporting neighbourhood centres and small shopping strips. Neighbourhoods within proximity to activity centres such as those near central Wodonga are generally ideal areas for diverse dwelling types and higher density housing.

- **Era of development** – The era of development can differentiate one neighbourhood or even dwelling from the other. This can be seen in the street layout, architectural styles and even the location of powerlines and services (i.e. above or underground) in older and newer developments within Wodonga.
Sloping topography and views from Alpine Views Estate

Greenfield development in Riverside Estate

Low density rural character in Felltimber Estate
CHARACTER TYPES

Figure 25: Wodonga Neighbourhood Character areas
According to General Practice Notes (see PPN 28 and 43) preferred neighbourhood character is either:

- The existing character of an area; or,
- An identified future neighbourhood character different to the existing character of an area.

Elements and neighbourhood characteristics of an area that are to be respected, enhanced or avoided can be conveyed through a preferred character statement or neighbourhood profile. This establishes future objectives and direction for development within a precinct.

The purpose of Neighbourhood Character Profiles is to more clearly define and understand existing character types, precincts, elements and most importantly, provide clarity for the preferred future character of a neighbourhood. It will be used as an educational tool for public use to help ensure that new development contributes to the desired character within a given neighbourhood.

Profiles include a general precinct description, character subtype category, details on existing character elements, a preferred future character statement, the types of changes expected and supported, issues and concerns, current zones, overlays and other specific tools that affect character.

In Wodonga, 42 precincts have been identified. Each has been grouped within the three major character types and six subtypes.
### General Character Description

Areas of heritage value or unique architectural style, close to or interfacing with activity centre boundaries.

Consists of older dwellings.

### Precincts

Beechworth Road

Precinct A

### Opportunities/ Locational attributes

Direct access to services and facilities.

Some areas are suitable for infill development.

### Key issues and concerns

Development pressures associated with urban consolidation around Lawrence Street.

Barriers to ensuring that new development complements older building forms and styles while accommodating change that contributes to diversity and affordability objectives.

### Development type

Sensitive infill development and possibly strategic development sites (e.g. Lutheran Church, 14 Havelock St).

---

**Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character**

Careful consideration should be taken to ensure that new development is sympathetic to older and valued building forms, architectural styles and design, while accommodating change that contributes to the diversity and affordability objectives. New developments should enhance the level of amenity, safety and surveillance within the neighbourhood, as well as contribute to a strong landscape character, such as along Beechworth Road, where design should reinforce a ‘green’ stately entry to the Central Business Area. Neighbouring retail and commercial development should continue to respect and be compatible with the prevailing residential character of the area, particularly along Beechworth Road.

---

![Beechworth Road](image1)

![Newer developments within Precinct A](image2)

![Older dwelling style within Precinct A](image3)
**Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character**

Neighbourhoods within Urban 2 are likely to vary in types of preferred future development. Some areas such as HCV, Phillips and Precincts C, D, E and F are likely to be more suitable for strategic redevelopment in the form of higher density infill developments compared to others based on increased accessibility and closer proximity to established activity and transport nodes as well as community and health services.

Higher density infill developments should be well integrated with the surrounding environment. Such developments will complement the form and siting of existing dwellings, while contributing to diversity and affordable housing objectives. Current elements such as variations in low or permeable front fences that visually address the street should be encouraged to contribute to the visual amenity of neighbourhoods. Careful consideration should also be given to areas with unique landscape character such as Precinct G. Developments abutting Sumsion Gardens should be responsive to topography and landscape features so as not to undermine the well-established public and visual amenity provided by the gardens.

---

**General Character Description**

- Predominantly grid street layout or modified grid with a few laneways.
- Varied dwelling style and era of construction (1920s-1980s).
- Zero or low fencing of varied styles.

**Precincts**

- Precinct B-H: HCV, Killara, Phillips, Skitch, Watsun

**Opportunities / Locational attributes**

- Well located to services and facilities.
- Suitable for infill development and increased densities.
- Areas for affordable housing projects (e.g. 30 Jarrah St/41 Pearce St).

**Key issues and concerns**

- Barriers to encouraging urban consolidation that contributes to diversity and affordability objectives, while maintaining valued neighbourhood characteristics.

**Development type**

- Infill, strategic infill areas and strategic development sites.
**REGIONAL SUBURBAN 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Character Description</th>
<th>Older dwelling styles (1970s-1990s era brick dwellings) within proximity to local destinations and established community infrastructure. Overhead power lines.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Precincts</td>
<td>Belvoir  Biralee Park  Gayview  Marimba  Parkland  Waratah Park  Willow Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities / Locational attributes</td>
<td>Well located to services and facilities, particularly schools, leisure facilities and local activity centres.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key issues and concerns</td>
<td>Varied fencing and landscaping character. Limitations of overhead powerlines. Maintaining public realm appearance and attractiveness of neighbourhoods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development type</td>
<td>Infill</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character**

New developments, which are likely to be infill developments, should enhance landscape characteristics and sense of place, while complying with sustainable neighbourhood principles by contributing to connectivity between open spaces, community infrastructure and destinations (e.g. schools, the Wodonga Leisure Centre, neighbourhood town centres), local shops and residential areas.
Regional Suburban 2

Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character

The focus within these growth areas should be to enhance liveability and sense of place that demonstrates Wodonga’s characteristics such as its valued landscape features. These precincts are dominated by conventional contemporary dwellings with short setbacks. This built form dominated character is further emphasised by current lack of distinctive landscape and entry features, quality open spaces, greening, and vegetation. To achieve the preferred future character the following objectives can be implemented:

- Encourage new developments which positively contribute to sense of place and community.
- Prioritise well-connected quality open spaces, enhanced streetscape, landscaping and entry features.
- Ensure that footpaths and cycling paths are connected to local destinations and public transport.
- Prioritise slope responsive design on sloping land. Consider optimal road and lot orientation, construction methods minimising cut and fill and slab construction coupled with retaining walls and high Colorbond fencing to avoid terracing effect and overlooking of private open space.
- Prioritise potential to specify no front fencing forward of the main building line, strong landscape character objectives within the public and private realm to enhance open space and green character and sense of spaciousness (i.e. offset the shorter setbacks to street). enable and support maturity of plantings. Consider suitable species for greater canopy cover which will be looked after by the community. This can be advocated through community targeted programs and educational material (e.g. ‘Adopt a tree’ program which shows people how to care for street trees).
**Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character**

New developments, which are likely to be infill developments, should enhance landscape characteristics and sense of place, while complying with sustainable neighbourhood principles by contributing to connectivity between open spaces, community infrastructure and destinations (e.g., schools, the Wodonga Leisure Centre, neighbourhood town centres, local shops and residential areas). New development should positively address the landscape dominated character of these areas by protecting and enhancing valued landscape features such as mature native vegetation, well-established landscaping and streetscapes. Ensuring high quality visual amenity and liveability is essential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Precincts</th>
<th>Alpine Views</th>
<th>Baranduda Grove</th>
<th>Cambourne Park (North)</th>
<th>Country Club (East)</th>
<th>Country Club (West)</th>
<th>Federation Park</th>
<th>Glenwood</th>
<th>Western Park</th>
<th>Yarralumla Rise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General Character Description</td>
<td>Large lots (800-5000sqm)</td>
<td>Modest to large front setbacks</td>
<td>No fencing</td>
<td>Mature vegetation and well-established landscaping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunities/Locational attributes</td>
<td>Interfacing community open spaces and valued landscape features including WREN and hilltop reserves</td>
<td>Generally has high amenity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key issues and concerns</td>
<td>Continued protection of mature vegetation and valued landscaping</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development type</td>
<td>Infill, greenfield growth and low density</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Image of map with different precincts and open spaces highlighted.*
Preferred Future Neighbourhood Character

These outer residential areas of Wodonga interface wide-open spaces for conservation, recreation and further residential growth. New development, which is likely to be incremental low density residential, should positively address the landscape dominated character of these areas by protecting and enhancing valued landscape features such as mature native vegetation, well-established landscaping and streetscapes. Ensuring high quality visual amenity and liveability is essential.

General Character Description

- Large dwellings and lot sizes (1500sqm-8ha)
- Generous setbacks
- Rural style road and fencing
- Mature vegetation and well-established landscaping

Key issues and concerns

- Conflicting preferred outcomes (e.g. subdivide or not to subdivide)
- Premature fragmentation of land
- Continued protection of mature vegetation and valued landscaping
- Minimising Bushfire risk

Opportunities/Local attributes

- Outer residential areas of Wodonga interfacing wide-open spaces for recreation or conservation including WREN and hilltop reserves

Development type

- Low density, rural living and rural settlements

LANDSCAPE DOMINATED 2
Quality has been identified as a key detailed pillar of the Housing Strategy to ensure the delivery of high quality housing in terms of amenity, and to ensure that current and new housing developments positively contribute to neighbourhood character. Delivering houses, neighbourhoods and precincts of high quality requires consideration for neighbourhood character as it influences how residents and visitors experience Wodonga. Several factors and elements contribute to Wodonga’s neighbourhood character, from topography, streetscapes and landscaping to built form and architecture, as outlined in the NCA report. Neighbourhood character is expressed through a combination of these public and private elements.

This section summarises key issues relating to neighbourhood character based on the six character subtypes and future development growth areas. This section summarises key issues relating to these areas and provides objectives, specific recommendations and actions based on findings from the Wodonga Neighbourhood Character Analysis (NCA), to help create and manage the preferred character of Wodonga’s neighbourhoods.

**URBAN 1**
- Development pressures associated with urban consolidation around Lawrence Street Heritage Precinct.
- Initial heritage study (Wodonga Heritage Study and Thematic Environmental History) identified further heritage places for investigation, which are yet to be implemented.

**URBAN 2**
- Impact of development or redevelopment on neighbourhood character – While strategic development sites and strategic infill areas offer an opportunity to provide diverse housing stock and an increase in density, which contributes to objectives of affordability and choice, new housing within established areas should positively respond to the preferred neighbourhood character.
- Impact on amenity – Urban amenities (e.g. open space, recreational facilities, pedestrian spaces such as footpaths, access to goods and services) contribute significantly to the living experiences within Wodonga’s neighbourhoods. Impacts on amenity such as traffic, noise and poor maintenance of public spaces are key considerations.
- Minimum Garden Area Requirements – These are most likely to impact on incremental infill development in the established neighbourhoods – for example, subdivision of a standard residential lot (e.g. 800m2) into two or more lots.
Regional Suburban 1

- Limitations of overhead powerlines
- Barriers to maintaining public realm appearance and attractiveness of neighbourhoods

Regional Suburban 2

- Deficiency of quality open spaces, greening and distinct landscape features in some areas.
- Barriers to encouraging preferred neighbourhood character within emerging neighbourhoods (e.g. Riverside, Whenby Grange and Wattle Glen).
- Responding to landscape features such as WRENs and offset sites

Landscape Dominated 1

- Barriers to continued protection of mature vegetation and valued landscaping.

Landscape Dominated 2

- Barriers to maintaining the rural character of these areas given the changing population and expected growth.
- Conflicting preferred outcomes (e.g. to subdivide or not to subdivide).
- Premature fragmentation of land.
- Continued protection of mature vegetation and valued landscaping
- Minimising bushfire risk

Future Development Areas

- Barriers to creating new neighbourhoods with a unique point of difference that is reflective of Wodonga – Currently, there is a lack of clarity and guidance regarding the preferred future character objectives. This report and Wodonga’s Housing Strategy seeks to begin to address this issue.
- The role of infrastructure in neighbourhood character – Infrastructure is designed to serve a functional role rather than contribute to neighbourhood and community buildings.
- Balancing efficiency and positive urban design outcomes – Historically, residential subdivisions have been designed for efficiency of infrastructure serviceability and lot yield rather than urban design principles. This has resulted in some missed opportunities and issues, such as:
  - Slope responsive design and;
  - Corner lots not positively responding to the street interface (e.g. high Colorbond fencing forward of housing).
- Deficiency of quality open spaces, greening and distinct landscape features in some areas.
### Objective 15
To ensure that development is responsive to the preferred future character of the area. This requires clear and holistic communication of preferred outcomes and management processes through the planning scheme and the use of non-legislative tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.1</td>
<td>Establish a program to educate councillors, council officers and the development community (through Developers Forum) on neighbourhood character, and how to use the Neighbourhood Character Analysis and Profiles in conjunction to the Housing Strategy to ensure existing and preferred neighbourhood character outcomes are clear.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>Establish process improvements by addressing conflicts between planning and legislative tools, in addressing neighbourhood character. Use the findings of the Neighbourhood Character Analysis and Housing Strategy.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>Implement a suite of residential zone schedules to more holistically communicate preferred character outcomes within Wodonga’s character precincts. The schedules should include preferred future character statements and objectives, variations to standards, application requirements and decisions guidelines, having regard to the Neighbourhood Character Analysis and Housing Strategy.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.4</td>
<td>Engage with the development industry regarding preferred future character and how the development industry can contribute to an overall positive character for Wodonga.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Urban 1

#### Objective 16
To maintain and enhance valued elements which contribute to the heritage and neighbourhood character of Precinct A and Beechworth Road.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>Undertake and complete the remaining stage of the Wodonga Heritage Study to assess the heritage value of identified places.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.2</td>
<td>Implementation of the identified heritage sites based on the Wodonga Heritage Study and Thematic Environmental History.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Undertake detailed urban design work to inform the implementation of the General Residential Zone Schedule; including identifying preferred future character objectives, any variations to Clause 54 and 55 standards, application requirements and decision guidelines. (See also actions 20.1, 21.1, 22.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>Manage development pressures associated with urban consolidation around Lawrence Street (Heritage Precinct) by directing development to more suitable areas such as Urban 2. (See Objective 18 for Urban 2 objectives and actions.)</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Objective 17</td>
<td>To ensure that medium-density development sites (i.e. St John’s Church) respect the surrounding heritage, character values and amenity of Precinct A.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.1</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan Overlays (DPO) for site master planning to create certainty around preferred development outcomes for strategic development sites. (See also actions 5.1 and 18.2)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 18</td>
<td>To manage development within identified strategic development sites and strategic infill areas.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>Engage with development industry regarding preferred character within strategic development sites and strategic infill development areas (refer to Figure 34).</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18.2</td>
<td>Implement Development Plan Overlays (DPO) for site master planning to create certainty around preferred development outcomes for strategic development sites. (See also Action 17.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 19</td>
<td>To identify and assess other areas which may be suitable for strategic development.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.1</td>
<td>Using the strategic development criteria provided in the Neighbourhood Character Analysis, investigate suitable areas for strategic development.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.2</td>
<td>Undertake urban design assessment to determine the suitability of rezoning areas to Residential Growth Zone (RGZ).</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>Following assessment (action 19.2), implement the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) Schedule identifying design objectives, variations to Clause 54 and 55 standards, application requirements, and decision guidelines.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Objective 20</td>
<td>To maintain or enhance public realm appearance and attractiveness of neighbourhoods.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.1</td>
<td>Undertake detailed urban design work to inform the implementation of the General Residential Zone Schedule; including identifying preferred future character objectives, any variations to Clause 54 and 55 standards, application requirements and decision guidelines. (See also actions 16.3, 21.1, 22.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>Provide community educational sources regarding landscaping, including promoting the CFA resources Landscaping for Bushfire and Plant Selection Key. (See also actions 22.3, 23.2)</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Regional Suburban 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 21</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To encourage and shape the preferred neighbourhood character within greenfield growth areas of Regional Suburban 2 (Such as Whenby Grange, Wattle Glen and Riverside Estate).</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.1</td>
<td>Undertake detailed urban design work to inform the implementation of the General Residential Zone Schedule; including identifying preferred future character objectives, any variations to Clause 54 and 55 standards, application requirements and decision guidelines. (See also actions 16.3, 20.1, 21.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.2</td>
<td>Collaborate with the developer industry in forming a common goal in achieving positive built form outcomes within emerging greenfield growth areas. (See also action 24.2) An example design guide tool kit is provided within the Neighbourhood Character Analysis report, which can be used as a guiding tool between the council, developers and other relevant actors when identifying preferred character elements within greenfield growth areas.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>Providing subdivision and housing design guidelines that achieve slope responsive outcomes. Guidelines should identify potential opportunities for feature landscaping at estate entries and diversity of streetscapes (i.e. variation of street cross-sections, use of control medians, widened nature strips and localised widening for landscaping). (See also action 24.3)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Landscape Dominated 1</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Objective 22</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To protect and maintain areas of high amenity, mature vegetation and valued landscape features</td>
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<tr>
<td>22.1</td>
<td>Undertake detailed urban design work to inform the implementation of the General Residential Zone Schedule; including identifying preferred future character objectives, any variations to Clause 54 and 55 standards, application requirements and decision guidelines. (See also action 16.3, 20.1, 21.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>Apply appropriate controls such as Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) following outcomes of the significant tree register or any other biodiversity study, to control landscapes and vegetation that contribute to the preferred character. (See also actions 23.1 and 24.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22.3</td>
<td>Provide community educational sources regarding landscaping, including promoting the CFA resources <em>Landscaping for Bushfire and Plant Selection Key</em>. (See also actions 20.2, 23.2)</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>Apply appropriate controls such as Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) following outcomes of the significant tree register or any other biodiversity study, to control landscapes and vegetation that contribute to the preferred character. (See also actions 22.2 and 24.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.2</td>
<td>Provide community educational sources regarding landscaping, including promoting the CFA resources <em>Landscaping for Bushfire</em> and <em>Plant Selection Key</em>. (See also action 20.2, 22.3)</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.4</td>
<td>Ensure that the species selection, location and arrangement of landscaping considers and minimises bushfire risk.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Growth Areas**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Quality Objectives + Actions: Neighbourhood Character</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>Apply appropriate controls such as Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) following outcomes of the Significant Tree Register or any other biodiversity study, to control landscapes and vegetation that contribute to the preferred character. (See also actions 22.2 and 24.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.2</td>
<td>Collaborate with the developer industry in forming a common goal in achieving positive built form outcomes within emerging greenfield growth areas. (See also action 21.2) An example design guide tool kit is provided within the Neighbourhood Character Analysis report, which can be used as a guiding tool between the council, developers and other relevant actors when identifying preferred character elements within greenfield growth areas.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>Providing subdivision and housing design guidelines that achieve slope responsive outcomes. Guidelines should identify potential opportunities for feature landscaping at estate entries and diversity of streetscapes (i.e. variation of street cross-sections, use of control medians, widened nature strips and localised widening for landscaping). (See also action 21.3)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PART E

SUSTAINABILITY IN HOUSING
Sustainability has been identified as a key detailed pillar of the Housing Strategy to ensure the delivery of houses, neighbourhoods and precincts that improve quality of life, use resources more effectively and are more resilient to future climatic conditions.

There is a growing recognition that ‘housing affordability’ should consider not only upfront construction costs of housing, but also the long term operational costs of the housing over its lifecycle.

“The average Australian family now spends around $2,115 on household electricity and gas costs per year. This adds up to almost $20 billion across the whole economy. Low-energy homes can reduce living costs, empowering inhabitants to put money that would otherwise have been spent on energy bills towards energy efficiency improvements which further reduce living costs. Housing that is less reliant on air conditioning on hot days also puts less stress on the electricity grid, reducing the need for network upgrades and lowering electricity costs for everyone.”¹

Rising electricity prices have the greatest impact on the most vulnerable in the community who are more likely to have energy inefficient housing and appliances. Heatwaves and extreme heat have significant financial and health impacts on vulnerable households including self-rationing of heating and cooling and exacerbation of chronic health conditions.²

The majority of Wodonga’s residential growth is in greenfield subdivisions. The housing and communities we build today will represent much of our built form in 50, and even 100 years from now. Greenfield developments present an opportunity to create a more resilient system where there is reduced demand and more efficient use of water and energy, and reduced waste as listed in Table 9.

Under climate change scenarios, the frequency and intensity of bushfires and grassfires is expected to significantly increase. Fire seasons are expected to start earlier and last longer, with an increase in significant fire events expected as average temperatures rise and annual rainfall decreases.

Despite Wodonga’s high level of water security as a result of water storage capacity at Lake Hume and Dartmouth, a resilient approach for whole of water cycle management is required to adapt to climate change impacts such as drought, floods, fires and heatwaves to ensure more effective use of water within the landscape and enhance liveability.

A resilient approach to greenfield subdivisions and housing is increasingly important to future proof Wodonga to these changing climatic conditions. Figure 26 (overleaf) illustrates what Wodonga’s climate might be like in 2030, 2050 and 2090 under a high greenhouse gas emissions scenario.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fragile system</th>
<th>Resilient system</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High needs</td>
<td>Reduced needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grid dependent</td>
<td>Multisource energy supply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economically vulnerable (energy price variation)</td>
<td>Energy efficiency as a low risk investment, more available income</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term vision</td>
<td>Long term vision</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 9: A systematic approach to creating more resilient systems. Source: AECOM

Delivering neighbourhoods and precincts which are sustainable require careful planning to achieve environmentally-friendly and energy efficient places and buildings that:

- Protect and conserve resources
- Are energy and water efficient
- Promote alternative transport
- Use green infrastructure
- Support community cohesion, health and well-being

² Nicholls L, McCann H, Streniers Y & Bosomworth K. Heatwaves, Homes & Health: Why household vulnerability to extreme heat is an electricity policy issue. Centre for Urban Research, RMIT University, Melbourne.
What might Wodonga's climate be like in 2030, 2050 & 2090?

Climate Analogues explore what the future climate could be like for a given location. These analogue localities have been developed using the Analogues Explorer Tool from the CSIRO's Climate Change in Australia. This tool matches the proposed future climate of a region with the current climate experienced in another region using average annual rainfall and average annual maximum temperature (within set tolerances). They were developed using the maximum consensus of models (based on CMIP5) for the high greenhouse gas emissions scenario, (RCP 8.5). These analogues have been further refined to align with projected seasonal changes based on Model CESM1-CAM5. This assumes a slight rainfall increase to 2030, later declining across the Murray Basin Region and an average temperature increase of 4.83°C by 2090, based on data from the Climate Futures Tool.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Current Wodonga average temperature and rainfall</th>
<th>2030 Wodonga climate looks like Cootamundra</th>
<th>2050 Wodonga climate looks like Parkes</th>
<th>2090 Wodonga climate looks like Coonamble</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean Max. Temp. °C</td>
<td>Wodonga Projected 2030</td>
<td>Cootamundra Projected 2030</td>
<td>Wodonga Projected 2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>21.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>30.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>22.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>21.8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean Rainfall (mm)</td>
<td>Wodonga Projected 2030</td>
<td>Cootamundra Projected 2030</td>
<td>Wodonga Projected 2050</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring</td>
<td>187.8</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>168.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer</td>
<td>130.4</td>
<td>123</td>
<td>146.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Autumn</td>
<td>147.2</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>131.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter</td>
<td>232.5</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>185.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual</td>
<td>697.8</td>
<td>710</td>
<td>625.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 26: What might Wodonga’s climate be like in 2030, 2050 and 2090. Source: Agriculture Victoria
There are opportunities to improve sustainability at both subdivision and building scales. Measures can be low cost – such as using passive design, materials selection, insulation and glazing; other measures use newer technologies to meet energy, water and waste needs for the development.

Opportunities are often greatest early in the subdivision design process where benefits for the builder, home owner and the environment are most cost-effectively achieved. Significant resources are available to support decision-making to achieve environmentally sustainable design (ESD).

Delivering houses, neighbourhoods and precincts which are sustainable and climate resilient requires consideration of ESD principles at a range of scales, through regulatory and non-regulatory means and partnership and engagement with a range of actors in the development and building industry, as well as the community.

Environmentally Sustainable Design for subdivisions in Regional Victoria: Proof of Concept and Cost Benefit Analysis (ESD study) identifies ‘best practice’ principles and elements for an ESD subdivision, as outlined in the ESD study. These can be addressed at a range of development scales including precinct, neighbourhood and subdivision scales. The best practice principles are outlined in Figure 27.

![Figure 27: Best practice ESD principles](image-url)
COSTS AND BENEFITS

The ESD study found that there are clear social, economic and environmental benefits associated with ESD in subdivisions. These benefits differ across Victoria’s climate regions, as does the development context and capacity of councils and the residential development industry.

Subdivision of land and development of dwellings are predominantly two separate processes in regional Victoria which creates a challenge specific to the regional areas in applying ESD principles in subdivisions. However, in many instances these are intrinsically linked in that a subdivision is completed for the purpose of dwelling development occurring.

As identified in the ESD study, there is a disconnect between subdivision and dwelling development as a result of the separate processes involved. To address this, the ESD study assessed the costs and benefits of both dwelling and subdivision-based interventions.

The study assessed three climate zones of the eight regional councils. Table 11 highlights the key results for Wodonga’s climate (zone 6 of the National Construction Code climate zones). These results should be read in conjunction with the ESD study which provides the full details of the Cost Benefit Analysis including the methodology and assumptions. It should also be noted that the results reflect economic benefits only and are based on historic climate data rather than future climate projections.

The analysis found that dwelling orientation is a no / low cost intervention. The difference in energy use in an average single storey dwelling with best orientation (e.g. north-facing living spaces) and worst orientation (e.g. south-facing living spaces) in Wodonga’s climate was estimated as 4 kWh/m², which equates to approximately $300 per household per annum, based on current electricity prices.

Orientation impacts the effectiveness of shading and solar interventions. For example, if the dwelling has poor orientation, the reduction in energy use associated with shading is greater than if the dwelling has good orientation, the need for shading to achieve reduction in energy use is significantly less. This suggests the council should ensure north-facing orientation is optimised in new subdivisions when considering applications under Clause 56.

The study also finds that ESD interventions are most cost effective when they are included when the dwelling is first constructed (compared to retrofitting); and the operating and maintenance costs associated with these ESD interventions tend to be zero, or relatively low.

Other dwelling-based interventions (such as window placement and size, use of thermal mass, zoning of spaces and draft-proofing / building sealing) were not been modelled, but have potential to reduce energy consumption and are relatively inexpensive, especially when considered in the design / planning phase.

The ESD study includes a case study of recent research by ASBEC and ClimateWorks1 for improving energy efficiency of housing, which identifies the following.

1. There are immediate cost effective opportunities to improve the energy efficiency requirements in the National Construction Code. Reducing air leakage is a major opportunity for many building types assessed, along with ceiling fans and roof insulation in some cases. Across a range of climate zones and building types, these measures could individually deliver bill savings of up to $150 per household per year, with savings more than offsetting additional capital costs.

---

Dwelling based energy interventions | Payback period (approximate years)
---|---
Enhanced Insulation | 12 - 16
Enhanced Shading | 9 - 20
Enhanced Glazing | 31
Solar Panels | 4
Solar with battery storage | 12
Heat Recovery Ventilation | 24 - 30
Rainwater tank plumbed to washing machine | 10

Table 10: Energy interventions and water interventions cost benefit results for Wodonga's climate zone. Source: AECOM

Combined, cost-effective measures could reduce energy consumption for heating and cooling by an estimated 28 to 51 per cent across a range of housing types and climates. This is equivalent to between 1 and 2.5 stars on the NatHERS scheme. In most jurisdictions, implementing these improvements would mean setting minimum requirements at the equivalent of 7 star NatHERS or higher.

The ASBEC and ClimateWorks research identifies that 58 per cent of Australia’s buildings in 2050 will be built after 2019, so even a three year delay in improving energy efficiency requirements in the National Construction Code would result in:

- An estimated $1.1 billion in unnecessary energy bills for Australian households to 2050
- $530 million in unnecessary network investments (or $104 million net additional energy costs after capital costs are taken into account); and,
- 3 million tonnes of additional greenhouse gas emissions.

Stakeholder consultation identified an issue regarding inconsistency of the NCC Climate Zones across the Albury-Wodonga region.

Wodonga is identified as Climate Zone 6 under the NCC climate zones, which is the same as Melbourne; while Albury is identified as Climate Zone 4, which is the same as Griffith or Mildura (see map in Figure 28). This raises concerns regarding the appropriateness of a substantial gap in climate zones between Albury and Wodonga, and its impact on the dwelling design in response to the different climatic zones.

The NCC climate zones inform energy rating assessment frameworks, which further exacerbates this inconsistency. The Nationwide House Energy Rating Scheme (NaTHERS) categorises Wodonga as Climate Region 66 “Ballarat”, while Albury as Climate Region 20 “Wagga”. (See maps in Figures 29 and 30).

A more consistent and appropriate approach to climate zones is required across the Albury-Wodonga region to ensure the assessment frameworks accurately reflect climatic conditions and facilitate the design of cost-effective sustainable measures for dwellings in the region.
Figure 28: National Construction Code (NCC) climate zones map - Albury Wodonga

Figure 29 and 30: NaTHERS maps- Albury and Wodonga
As there was limited quantitative data available on environmental and social benefits (such as the value that people place on enhanced habitat as a result of the installation of bio-links / green corridors), the study provided a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis of various ESD interventions at subdivision scale.

Greenfield subdivisions consist of two components; the public realm (e.g. roads, public open space) and private realm (i.e. residential lots). There are different types of ESD interventions applicable to these two components of a subdivision. The assessment of subdivision-based interventions is conducted by combining ESD interventions in the public realm and ESD interventions for dwellings.

For the ESD interventions in the public realm, assessment is provided through a combination of quantitative and qualitative analysis. Table 11 demonstrates the quantitative analysis results of the public realm related ESD interventions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ESD Intervention</th>
<th>10 lots</th>
<th>100 lots</th>
<th>500 lots</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased use of recycled road material</td>
<td>$606</td>
<td>$561</td>
<td>$561</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enhanced canopy cover</td>
<td>$994</td>
<td>$1114</td>
<td>$1114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased use of Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD)</td>
<td>n.a*</td>
<td>$3824</td>
<td>$2037</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Costs have not been estimated for raingardens within 10 lot subdivisions as the area of public realm space would not support this type of WSUD.

The break-even analysis result above identifies the per lot value of benefits that would need to be achieved to offset the cost of the ESD interventions. The increased use of recycled road material had the lowest, and increased use of WSUD had the highest, break-even value.

It is noted while WSUD is highly site specific and cost variable, this analysis suggests that based on Wodonga’s median land price, this represents 1.4 - 2.7 per cent of lot prices, depending on the scale of the development. The use of WSUD is associated with a range of benefits including increased visual and recreational amenity of developments, reduced water treatment costs, large scale (wetland) biodiversity value and improved water quality for receiving environments. The break-even analysis suggests that scale is important when considering the costs and benefits of implementation of ESD measures within subdivisions.

Case studies obtained from the literature review provide qualitative evidence that there are benefits from adopting ESD measures in the public realm of a subdivision. Furthermore, the magnitude of the benefits are less driven by climate than the dwelling-based interventions and, therefore may be more appropriate for a wider number of climate zones.

For the private realm component, the results of the dwelling-based interventions were scaled up to reflect the corresponding subdivision sizes (i.e. 10 lots, 100 lots and 500 lots). The cost benefit results and payback periods are consistent with the results of the dwelling-based assessment.

While the period of analysis was 30 years, the life of a residential subdivision is much more enduring and so subdivision-wide sustainability measures warrant greater consideration.

The study found that significant opportunity exists for cost effective measures to improve the ESD of subdivisions across regional Victoria.
The study recommended a flexible ‘road map’ approach for regional councils to address ESD, to take into account the different circumstances and drivers for different councils. The Roadmap identifies an extensive range of short, medium and longer-term actions to advance ESD subdivisions in Regional Victoria. These include actions for councils, groups of councils and for council advocacy.

The roadmap builds on the model established by the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE) as shown in Figure 31.

![Figure 31: CASBE model. Source: AECOM](image-url)
CONTEXT

Sustainability has been identified as a key detailed pillar of the Housing Strategy to ensure the delivery of houses, neighbourhoods and precincts that improve quality of life, use resources more effectively and are more resilient to future climatic conditions.

It is important to recognise that delivering ‘housing affordability’ needs to consider not only upfront construction costs of housing, but also the long term operational costs of the housing over its lifecycle.

KEY ISSUES

- Most housing in Wodonga is characterised as detached housing (85 per cent with the majority having 3 or more bedroom. Only 1 per cent of detached dwellings are on lots of less than 300 sqm, therefore a planning permit is rarely required for a single dwelling (refer to Table 4)
- Subdivision and housing are intrinsically linked, however as the majority of housing does not require a planning permit, even when a subdivision design provides good solar orientation, this is not always optimised in the dwelling design.
- There are gaps between the planning and building systems and a lack of statutory tools to assess ESD.
- There are cost effective opportunities to improve the liveability and affordability of housing over the longer term by ensuring housing and subdivisions integrate ESD principles.
- There is currently little awareness among buyers of the inexpensive measures which can be integrated early in the design phase of housing to deliver cost savings and improved liveability of homes (thermal comfort), including:
  - North facing living areas;
  - Appropriate window placement and size;
  - Use of thermal mass;
  - Zoning of spaces; and,
  - Draft-proofing / building sealing.
- Tension between increasing canopy cover to respond to rising temperatures and the need for bushfire resilient landscaping
- Moving toward a more resilient approach for whole of water cycle management to adapt to climate change impacts such as drought, floods, fires and heatwaves, ensure more effective use of water within the landscape and enhance liveability.
- Inconsistency of NCC climate zones and energy rating assessment frameworks across the Albury Wodonga. Greater consistency is essential for designing cost effective sustainable measures for dwellings in the region.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sustainability Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>25.1</td>
<td>Form partnerships with key stakeholders including state and local governments, CASBE, Greenhouse Alliances and tertiary institutions to progressively implement the regional roadmap.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.1</td>
<td>Progressively undertake projects identified in the Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy and Priority Implementation Plans.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.2</td>
<td>Progressively develop and update the Principal Pedestrian Network and Principal Bicycle Network in accordance with the Wodonga Integrated Transport Strategy, the growth strategy and the Precinct Structure Plan for Leneva-Baranduda.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.3</td>
<td>With support from Transport for Victoria, promote Wodonga’s Strategic Cycling Corridors in accordance with the Victorian Cycling Strategy 2018-28.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.4</td>
<td>Work collaboratively with relevant agencies, including Transport for Victoria, Public Transport Victoria and bus service providers, to review and seek improvements to the public transport network.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.1</td>
<td>Develop local tree species lists which positively contribute to urban ecology and consider survival rate under future climate projections.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.2</td>
<td>Protection and enhancement of existing native planted and remnant vegetation.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.3</td>
<td>Undertake urban heat vulnerability mapping and develop canopy targets for both public and private realms and establish greening program to reduce urban heat island effect.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.4</td>
<td>Investigate the value of tree density and coverage and barriers to increased canopy cover in Wodonga’s neighbourhoods. This could include developing suitable cross sections to ensure canopy trees can be accommodated in road reserves alongside services and infrastructure, or exploring a regional pilot for the Cool Streets™ initiative.</td>
<td>Capacity Building Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sustainability Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.5</td>
<td>Implement place-based integrated Water Management plans in priority open spaces to reduce dependence on potable water supply and keep public spaces green, cool, and improve community health. This could include stormwater harvesting, use of reclaimed water or rainwater projects.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.6</td>
<td>Ensure that strategic and statutory planning proposals satisfactorily address the considerations of Clause 13.02 Bushfire Risk, including the full range of development scales. Encourage the use of CFA publication Landscaping for Bushfire in development plan and subdivision design to minimise the passage of fire through the development. (See also actions 27.1, 27.3 and 27.4).</td>
<td>Planning Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.1</td>
<td>Support community champions to raise awareness of and improve ESD in subdivisions and housing (such as the community led Yackandandah Innovative Housing Forum exploring innovative approaches to developing sustainable and community-centred housing).</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.2</td>
<td>Investigate programs to engage with local builders to establish ESD display homes focused on energy efficiency rather than high-end finishes.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.3</td>
<td>Promote and develop education resources for home builders. This could include promotion of the Victorian Residential Efficiency Scorecard and the investigation of an app to optimise lot potential and easily assess ESD of a lot and dwelling.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.4</td>
<td>Develop new home owner kits identifying recommended plant species, waste information and other relevant information for how to maximise the ESD of their new home (including operation and maintenance).</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.5</td>
<td>Advocate to strengthen the energy efficiency requirements under the National Construction Code in line with the recommendations of the ASBEC and ClimateWorks research.</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>Advocate for the mandatory disclosure of energy ratings at the time of building design and time of sale in Victoria (as has been adopted in the ACT).</td>
<td>Advocacy</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sustainability Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>28.7</td>
<td>Advocate to improve the consistency of the Climate Zone Maps under the NCC to ensure that they more accurately reflect climatic conditions across Albury-Wodonga and facilitate the design of cost-effective sustainable measures for dwellings in the region. This advocacy should also extend to energy rating assessment frameworks such as the NaTHERS.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council advocacy</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.8</td>
<td>Work collectively with stakeholders to attract funding for sustainable retrofits of public and affordable housing stock.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.9</td>
<td>Work collectively with building and financial stakeholders to identify opportunities to include sustainable measures in housing design as part of the criteria of assessing mortgaging capacity.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Objective 29
To improve the sustainability of subdivisions at different scales.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Sustainability Objectives + Actions</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Council Role</th>
<th>Priority</th>
<th>Timing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>29.1</td>
<td>Engage with development industry stakeholders to improve orientation in land subdivision plans.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.2</td>
<td>Ensure development plan and subdivisions applications comply with the solar orientation standard in Clause 56.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.3</td>
<td>Work holistically across council. Co-ordination between departments is highly valued as enabling better ESD subdivisions. There should be internal support for processing applications with a high-level of ESD objectives.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.4</td>
<td>Inform the development community (through developer forums) about state government incentives and funding opportunities to support innovation (such as micro-grid funding).</td>
<td>Capacity Building Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate - ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.5</td>
<td>Identify financial barriers or innovative funding models to support ESD. This could include research into Special Rate Charges, green loans or environmental upgrade agreements.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.6</td>
<td>Investigate partnership with key stakeholders to facilitate study tours for local developers to learn from leading ESD subdivision developments.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short to medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.7</td>
<td>Investigate incentives to encourage ESD subdivisions. This could include developing protocol for a fast track approval process for developments that are achieving ‘better’ or ‘best practice’ ESD with clear criteria for eligibility.</td>
<td>Strategic Direction</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.8</td>
<td>Investigate pilot projects between councils and developers to showcase ESD features at the subdivision scale including the value created by good orientation.</td>
<td>Advocacy and Partnerships</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.9</td>
<td>Consider opportunities to strengthen ESD in the Wodonga Planning Scheme reviews including the Municipal Strategic Statement.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Immediate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No.</td>
<td>Sustainability Objectives + Actions</td>
<td>Type</td>
<td>Council Role</td>
<td>Priority</td>
<td>Timing</td>
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<tr>
<td>29.10</td>
<td>Undertake detailed urban design work to inform opportunities to embed ESD in the residential zone schedules. This could include tailoring the objectives, application requirements and decision guidelines and varying the Clause 54 and 55 standards to improve ESD outcomes for infill development (dwellings on lots under 300sqm or multi-dwelling on a lot). (See also actions 16.3, 20.1, 21.1 and 22.1)</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.11</td>
<td>Review overlays and identify opportunities to improve ESD, particularly in Development Plan Overlays.</td>
<td>Planning and Policy</td>
<td>Council responsibility</td>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>Medium to long-term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29.12</td>
<td>Develop a voluntary assessment framework to provide metrics improving ESD in subdivisions and reducing resource consumption.</td>
<td>Capacity Building</td>
<td>Council collaboration</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Short-term</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Objective 30**

To support and promote renewable energy.

| 30.1 | Support or partner with local environmental/energy groups to facilitate bulk buys for solar panels, solar hot water and batteries.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Advocacy and Partnerships | Council collaboration | High     | Immediate - ongoing |
| 30.2 | Investigate bulk buy schemes for solar panel, solar hot water and batteries for new housing estates and identify the barriers to take up so new dwellings can access more affordable renewable energy technologies. This may include ways to improve processes and timing of new dwellings and electricity connections to facilitate the feasibility of bulk buys.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Advocacy and Partnerships | Council collaboration | High     | Short to medium-term |

**Objective 31**

To improve the sustainability of municipal infrastructure.

| 31.1 | Adopt the Infrastructure Design Manual’s Sustainable Infrastructure Guidelines for a 12 month trial. Monitor results of projects and if feasible, adopt the IDM SIG on a permanent basis.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | Planning and Policy       | Council responsibility | High     | Immediate - ongoing |
PART F

IMPLEMENTATION
Planning tools, such as zones and overlays, are key levers for achieving preferred housing outcomes.

Changes to existing General Residential Zone (GRZ) schedules and the implementation of other appropriate zones, such as the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) are recommended implementation methods to accommodate change that contributes to diversity, affordability and quality objectives as set out in this report.

This section summarises analysis for recommended application of various zones and overlays and policy.
RESIDENTIAL ZONES

GENERAL RESIDENTIAL ZONE

The majority of Wodonga’s established residential housing supply is located in land zoned as General Residential Zone (GRZ) (refer to Section 3.2.4). At present, Wodonga's Planning Scheme does not make use of the variations available within the GRZ schedule. The Objectives contained within Part D of the Housing Strategy, and within the Neighbourhood Character Analysis recommend that a Schedule be prepared for each Character Type (defined in Part D), within the General Residential Zone. These include the following:

- Urban 1
- Urban 2
- Regional Suburban 1
- Regional Suburban 2
- Landscape Dominated 1 (part)

It is recommended that consideration be given to specifying application requirements (Section 5 of GRZ Schedule) and decision guidelines (Section 6 of GRZ Schedule) to give effect to proposed local policy (as recommended within the Housing Strategy Objectives) regarding diversity of housing and affordability. For example, include a decision guideline such as:

*Whether the proposal responds to the objectives in the Housing Diversity and Affordability Policy at clause XX.XX. (example only, policy has not been prepared).*

The Schedule to the zone should also specify sites that are exempt from the garden area requirement (those Strategic Development Sites identified in the Neighbourhood Character Analysis, and future sites that meet the criteria set out Chapter 4 of the Neighbourhood Character Analysis).

It is recommended that opportunities be considered to embed ESD in the residential zones schedules such as greening by tailoring the objectives, application requirements and decision guidelines and varying the Clause 54 and 55 standards to improve ESD outcomes for infill development (dwellings on lots under 300sqm or multi-dwelling on a lot).

Further detailed urban design work is required to inform the suitability of any variations to the Clause 54 and Clause 55 requirements (Section 3 of GRZ Schedule).
RESIDENTIAL GROWTH ZONE

Given the multiple housing objectives outlined within the Housing Strategy, applying the Residential Growth Zone has been recognised as a useful tool to meet multiple housing objectives. These objectives include:

- **Choice of Land**
  Objective 5: To preserve and promote opportunities for infill and strategic development sites when the market matures to deliver additional housing choice.

- **Diversity**
  Objective 8: To encourage housing to change over time to meet changing housing needs and emerging market opportunities

- **Affordable Housing:**
  Objective 10: To increase supply of quality affordable housing available for lower income households to access.

- **Quality**
  Objective 11: To ensure that development is responsive to the preferred future character of the area. This requires clear and holistic communication of preferred outcomes and management processes through the planning scheme and the use of non-legislative tools.

The Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) signifies key areas where high rates of change are encouraged. The zone allows for increased densities, a diversity of housing types and clear identification of design objectives as outlined in Clause 32.07 Residential Growth Zone of the Victorian Planning Provisions.

While currently not applied in Wodonga, the zone is suitable for areas within proximity to the Wodonga CBA, which offer good access to activity and transport nodes, have existing higher density residential development and do not have significant development restrictions such as heritage or significant landscape features.

When considering where to apply the RGZ, consideration should be given to where change is encouraged. The criteria established for Strategic Development Sites serves as a useful basis for this analysis. The following plans undertake an analysis using the criteria in table 12.

It is recommended that the Residential Growth Zone be applied to the area immediately surrounding the Activity Centre Zone (within 400m walkable catchment of the CBA), excluding areas of sensitive neighbourhood character, such as Beechworth Road, Precinct A and Precinct G.
**Accessibility**

Figure 32 provides an analysis of walkable catchments to the CBA and other community and open space facilities. The plan demonstrates that there are clear overlapping 'hot spots' where walkability to a range of destinations is concentrated. This is primarily in proximity to the CBA (within 400m of the Activity Centre Zone).

**Development Context and Neighbourhood Character**

Figure 33 and Figure 34 provide an analysis of the development context in terms of lot sizes, existing lot diversity, and neighbourhood character (for the purpose of analysis, the plan identifies only Urban 1 and Urban 2 precincts).

The Urban 1 and 2 precincts are used as a proxy for neighbourhood character that can appropriately absorb some change (note that select sub-precincts within the Urban Character Types) may not be appropriate for RGZ – including Beechworth Road, Precinct A and Precinct G).

Figure 34 also overlays the 400m walkable catchment to the Activity Centre Zone. These plans build the picture of an area that has a high degree of walkability, while also having capacity to absorb change without impacting detrimentally on neighbourhood character.

**Land Use and Environment**

Figure 34 provides an analysis of land that is currently zoned for residential purposes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CRITERIA</th>
<th>PLAN ANALYSIS</th>
<th>WHAT DOES THIS MEAN?</th>
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</table>
Figure 32: Walkable catchment hot spots from activity nodes, services and facilities
Figure 33: Lot sizes within Urban 1 and Urban 2 neighbourhood precincts
Figure 34: Map assessing suitable areas for Residential Growth Zone
It is recommended that the Development Plan Overlays (DPO) be applied to large Strategic Development Sites, which will be developed in multiple stages. The DPO will enable holistic planning of key sites.

It is also recommended that existing DPOs (and the endorsed Development Plans) used in greenfield growth areas are reviewed. An outcome of this review may include recommendations to improve ESD in DPOs.

The Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) may also be applied to certain areas in the future, pending the outcomes of the Significant Tree Register study (and any other biodiversity study undertaken).

The Neighbourhood Character Analysis makes a long term recommendation regarding potential review of covenants and other restrictions on title in established areas. An outcome of this review may include recommendations to replace the restrictions with a Design and Development Overlay (DDO). However, this is a long-term project, and as such, it is not anticipated that any DDOs will be applied as an immediate outcome of this Housing Strategy.

It is recommended that a policy be included within the MSS that translate the key objectives from the Housing Strategy regarding Housing Affordability, Diversity, Quality and Sustainability. Direction will then be given in the decision guidelines of the residential zone schedule to have regard to the policy.
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