

East Gippsland Shire Council

Homes for everyone – position paper 2026



EAST GIPPSLAND
SHIRE COUNCIL

Purpose and position

This position paper has been developed to enhance the understanding of housing issues and opportunities in East Gippsland, and to:

- » Bring together Council's current initiatives and protocols to support homelessness and housing delivery.
- » Clarify Council's role in meeting the housing needs of our community.
- » Identify opportunities for strategic partnerships.
- » Prioritise advocacy efforts relating to housing.

This paper can be used by Council, Council staff, support agencies, the housing sector and the community to support advocacy and action to address housing challenges.

The purpose is to provide strategic direction and associated actions to achieve Council's goal of 'homes for everyone'.

Council position

The homes we live in are fundamental to the wellbeing of our community. Council acknowledges the housing crisis affecting communities across Australia. East Gippsland is no exception. In rising to the challenge of providing access to safe and affordable housing for everyone, Council is committed to fulfil its role as leader, partner and advocate.

Leadership. Council will:

- » Where possible, ensure its services assist residents experiencing housing stress or homelessness.
- » Encourage, facilitate and where appropriate partner in demonstration projects delivering diverse and affordable housing.
- » Consider opportunities to use Council-owned land to support diverse and affordable housing opportunities.

Partnerships. Council will:

- » Collaborate with stakeholders and community members to ensure it has an ongoing awareness of housing challenges and solutions.
- » Investigate partnerships to increase investment in diverse and affordable housing and associated services.

Advocacy. Council will:

- » Advocate for appropriate levels of accessible health and wellbeing services.
- » Use this position paper to support homelessness and affordable housing advocacy.

Seek improved regulations to promote diverse and innovative housing solutions.

Acknowledgement of Traditional Custodians

Council acknowledges the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and pays deep respect to all First Nations peoples and communities with enduring cultural connections to East Gippsland, who have cared for and nurtured Country for tens of thousands of years.

We honour and celebrate the rich diversity, living cultures, and ongoing contributions of all First Nations peoples who live, work, visit, and play across East Gippsland.

We also acknowledge the many First Nations communities who, together, continue to shape and contribute to the region we know as East Gippsland. The place where we, as Local Government, deliver services and support to our community.

Current housing situation in East Gippsland



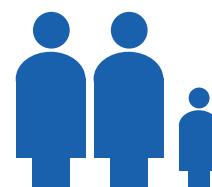
There are approximately **26,000** homes in East Gippsland.



It is estimated that we will need **11,000** well located new homes by **2050**.

The average household size in East Gippsland is

2.2



(compared to 2.52 across Victoria).

Almost **4,600** private dwellings are unoccupied. This is **17.5%** of total.



To meet year 2050 demand, **2,050**



of all new homes need to be social and affordable housing.

Nearly **80%** of existing housing stock has **3+** bedrooms.



In 2025, **214 people** experienced homelessness, which is likely an underestimate.

To meet year 2050 demand, **2,050** of all new homes need to be social and affordable housing.



Over **6,000** homes have **2+** spare bedrooms.



1,854 East Gippsland households are on the Victorian Housing Register priority access waiting list. (Based on location preferences – June 2025).



Between 2020 and 2025, median house prices in East Gippsland have increased by an average of **9.7%** per annum.



Approximately **2,900** households – **13%** of total – are experiencing housing stress.*
*30% or more income spent on rent.



Council-owned land supports

60 dwellings for social housing and has

historically contributed to a further

38 dwellings through joint venture arrangements with relevant agencies.



Private rentals in East Gippsland are classified as '**unaffordable**' or '**moderately unaffordable**' (SGS Rental Affordability Index 2025) with affordability trends worsening.

Policy context

National

The **National Housing and Homelessness Plan** aims to unite efforts to improve housing and homelessness outcomes. This includes making it easier to buy or rent a home and better support people experiencing homelessness and housing insecurity. The Plan is part of a housing reform agenda, which includes:

- » The **National Housing Accord** to build 1.2 million new, well-located homes over 5 years from July 2024
- » The \$10 billion **Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)**, which will support the delivery of 30,000 new social and affordable homes over its first 5 years.
- » **Increase to the maximum rates of** Commonwealth Rent Assistance to assist low-income renters.
- » The **Home Guarantee Scheme** to assist home ownership via lower deposits.

State

The **Victorian Housing Statement** sets out a plan to build 2.24 million homes in Victoria over 30 years, including 425,600 homes in regional Victoria. Initiatives associated with the Housing Statement include:

- » A review of the planning system to increase housing supply.
- » Improving housing design in locations close to employment and services.
- » Protecting renters' rights.
- » An increase in social and affordable housing via the Big Housing Build.
- » A long-term plan for housing as part of **Plan for Victoria**.

Plan for Victoria sets housing targets for each municipality in Victoria. The 2050 housing target for East Gippsland is 11,000 new homes, with 70% of new homes to be built in established residential areas.

Councils must consider relevant legislation relating to the delivery of housing, including:

- » **Local Government Act 2020** – priority is to be given to achieving the best outcomes for the community, including future generations.
- » **Planning and Environment Act 1987** – to facilitate the provision of affordable housing in Victoria.

Local

Theme 1 of the **East Gippsland Council Plan 2025-2029** promotes community wellbeing and social responsibility with a connected and inclusive community which endeavours not to leave anyone behind. **Council Plan** focus areas include:

- » Developing a policy position and advocacy program for homelessness; affordable and social housing.
- » Support the provision of more social and affordable housing and housing diversity through land use planning.
- » Secure future land and housing supply in accordance with the **Housing and Settlement Strategy 2023** and associated plans.

The East Gippsland **Housing and Settlement Strategy 2023** identifies housing needs and guides future housing development to 2041. The Strategy:

- » Provides greater certainty as to where new housing will be developed and the type of housing that is anticipated.
- » Guides Council's decision-making processes, policy development, and infrastructure investment.
- » Creates a framework that supports development of affordable housing and a diversity of housing types to meet the needs of different people at different times in their lives.

Council's role

The Housing Continuum

The housing market is complex and comprises a range of different housing sectors.

It is not the sole responsibility of Council to meet the housing needs of the community in all sectors of the housing continuum (Figure 1). Indeed, it is important for Council to understand:

- » Where its responsibilities and resources can best support the efficient provision of housing opportunities.
- » The role of delivery partners and associated service providers in the housing continuum and where Council can interact with partners to facilitate housing opportunities for everyone.
- » Council can fulfil different roles that relate to different sectors of the housing continuum.



Figure 1. The housing continuum

Homelessness

A person is considered homeless if their dwelling is inadequate (e.g. unsafe or unhealthy); have no or insecure tenure; or have a lack of control and access to space for social relations.

Council recognises that access to safe and secure housing is a fundamental human right that directly impacts health and wellbeing. Council has a shared role in relation to homelessness, being one of many stakeholders accountable to improve community wellbeing outcomes.

As outlined in Victoria's homelessness and rough sleeping action plan, people can find themselves sleeping rough for many different reasons and for different periods of time. Three groups affected by rough sleeping – each with different housing and support needs – are:

- » Those who are recently homeless and sleeping rough due to personal crises such as eviction, job loss, family violence or relationship breakdown – many of whom will successfully resolve their homelessness, either independently, or with the help of specialist homelessness services.
- » Those who have been sleeping rough for an extended period (longer than 12 months) who have multiple related issues – such as mental and physical illness, alcohol and other drug use issues and past trauma – and are unlikely to successfully negotiate and sustain a pathway out of chronic homelessness without intensive resources and ongoing support.
- » Those at risk of chronic homelessness and rough sleeping following their release or discharge from institutional settings including prisons, youth justice centres and inpatient health facilities, as well as young people leaving out-of-home care.

Current Council initiatives

- » **Partnerships:** Working closely with agencies and support services who assist people experiencing homelessness to access housing pathways, health services, and other essential services.
- » **Community interface:** Within the guidelines of relevant local laws, Council supports people in the community experiencing homelessness in public spaces by connecting them with homelessness service providers.
- » **Advocacy:** Actively engages with all levels of government, agency partners and homelessness organisations to advocate for increased resources and services to prevent homelessness and transition those experiencing or at risk of homelessness to secure housing.

Government subsidised and community sector housing

There are a variety of housing options that are subsidised by the government or community housing providers. **Crisis and transitional housing** provide short-term support for people who are experiencing homelessness or need to leave their home for emergency reasons (e.g. to escape domestic violence).

Public and community housing is more commonly referred to as **social and affordable housing**. Public housing is government-owned (Department of Families, Fairness and Housing - DFFH) and community housing is owned by not-for-profit Registered Housing Agencies. This housing is made available on a longer-term basis for people in low-income groups and/or people who have special housing needs (e.g. all abilities housing).

The construction and management (including placing people into housing) of social and affordable housing is undertaken by the Victorian Government and Registered Housing Agencies. Council has an important role to play in working in partnership with social and affordable housing providers and ensuring the efficient regulation of housing approvals.

Current Council initiatives

- » **Land use policy development:** Using land use planning policy and planning application assessment pathways to encourage the development of social and affordable housing in locations with access to services and facilities.
- » **Efficient planning approvals:** Leveraging the planning system to deliver well designed, energy efficient and climate resilient social and affordable housing, including innovative housing opportunities such as residential villages, tiny homes etc.

- » **Utilising Council-owned land:** Making Council-owned land available for social and affordable housing through existing properties, and new properties where appropriate.
- » **Advocacy:** Actively engage with all levels of government, agency partners, Registered Housing Agencies and private developers to advocate for increased investment in social and affordable housing and associated services.
- » **Local Law review:** Ensure the review of Council's Local Laws include consideration of social and affordable housing opportunities.

Private market housing

Private market housing comprises homes for rent or home ownership without any government subsidy. Some private market rental homes are suitable for people on low incomes and can be used to support the supply of affordable housing.

Current Council initiatives

- » **Land use policy development:** Ensuring the adequate supply of land to meet future housing needs.
- » **Diversity of housing:** Using land use planning policy and planning application assessment pathways to encourage housing stock and future housing supply to match the demographic profile and needs of the community.
- » **Support higher density development:** Enabling the sustainable use of land and infrastructure by supporting higher density housing development in appropriate locations.
- » **Key worker accommodation:** Support key worker accommodation investment (e.g. Regional Worker Accommodation Fund).
- » **Economic development:** One of the focus areas of the East Gippsland Economic Development Strategy 2022-2032 is the supply of all housing types, including worker accommodation and social housing.

Council's commitment to action

The policy environment and market conditions relating to housing are rapidly evolving as the Australian community responds to the challenges associated with the housing crisis. It is essential that Council remains agile in responding to emerging opportunities to address homelessness and support the delivery of housing across the housing continuum.

This position paper provides the overarching commitment of Council to play its role in alleviating homelessness and delivering diverse and affordable homes for everyone. The position paper will be supported by an action plan – a working document developed and updated to respond to challenges and leverage opportunities aligned with the position paper.

A report will be prepared annually by Council to monitor and report on progress.