

# A Home in Hepburn Shire – Affordable Housing Strategy and Action Plan

## Stage 2 Community Engagement Findings

(supplement to the Stage 1 Community Engagement Findings Report)



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HEPBURN SHIRE COUNCIL

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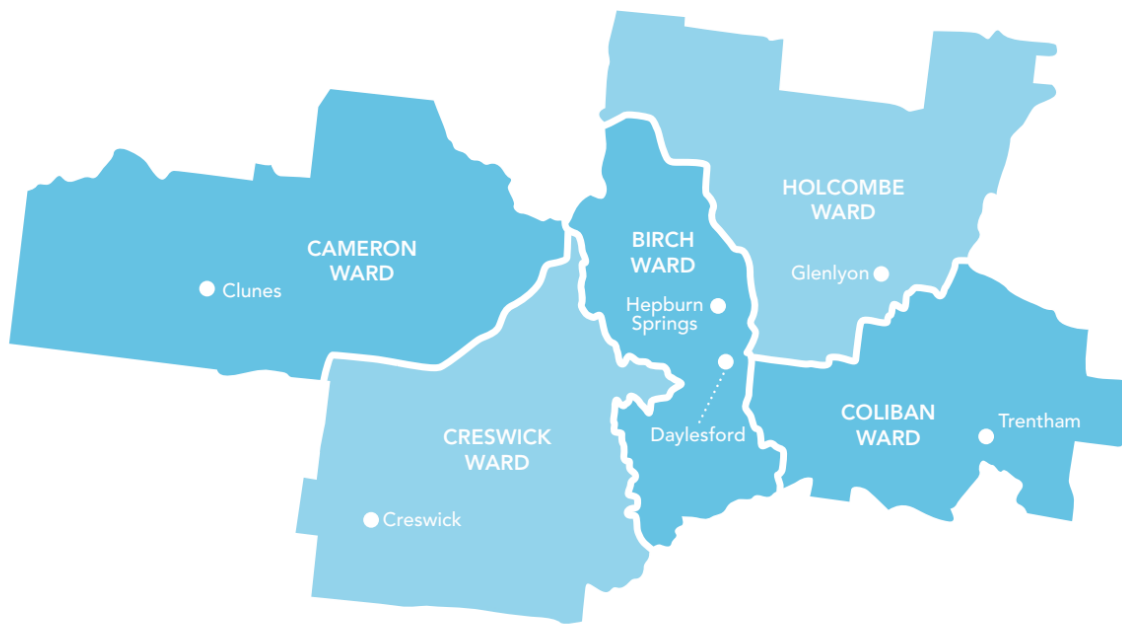
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Activate Consulting and Hornsby & Co. acknowledge the Dja Dja Wurrung as the Traditional Owners of the lands and waters on which this report is based. On these lands, Djaara have performed age-old ceremonies of celebration, initiation, and renewal. We recognise their resilience through dispossession and it is a testament to their continuing culture and tradition, which is strong and thriving. We also acknowledge the neighbouring Traditional Owners, the Wurundjeri to our South East and the Wadawurrung to our South West and pay our respect to all Aboriginal peoples, their culture, and lore. We acknowledge their living culture and the unique role they play in the life of this region.



## 1. STAGE 2 ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

### Engagement purpose and objectives

The community engagement process has been designed in three stages, to consult and involve the community through the Strategy development process. These include:

- Stage 1 – Understanding community experiences and exploring options, supported by an Issues and Options Paper (November/December 2022)
- Stage 2 - Testing and prioritising potential actions (February 2023)
- Stage 3 – Release of the Draft AH Strategy and Action Plan for feedback (April 2023)

The purpose of the engagement is to gather local input and evidence to inform the development of the AH Strategy and Action Plan and build community awareness and support for its implementation.

This Community Engagement Findings Report outlines the findings from the second stage of engagement. It is intended to be read as a supplement to the full [Stage 1 Engagement Findings Report](#) which includes a detailed project background.

### Engagement approach and participation

Stage 2 of the engagement program consisted of an Affordable Housing Solutions Forum (Forum), held from 5-9pm on Wednesday 8 February 2023 at the Daylesford Town Hall.

The aim of the Forum was to bring together a range of people with different perspectives and experiences to consider, refine and prioritise potential actions emerging from Stage 1 research and consultation. It also provided Councillors with the opportunity to hear and understand the community's perspectives to inform their decision-making.

Participants were recruited for the forum in one of two ways:

- Targeted invitations for identified key stakeholder organisations to send a representative; and
- An Expression of Interest (EOI) process for interested local community members.

The EOI process was implemented through the Stage 1 engagement activities and 46 people registered their interest (42 through Stage 1 consultation, 4 late-registrations). All were invited to attend.

To support the Forum, participants were provided with:

- A succinct [summary of the Stage 1 research and engagement findings](#)
- Information about what to expect and how to prepare for the Forum
- Links to access the full [Stage 1 Background Report](#) and [Stage 1 Engagement Findings Report](#) (should they wish to review the detail)

The Forum was designed to be interactive and engaging, to enable participants to share their ideas and experience and learn from each other.

It began by getting everyone acquainted to enable constructive conversation through the session. Participants were then presented with key background information and an overview of the findings from the research and Stage 1 engagement. This included consideration of the many different perspectives expressed by different cohorts within the community (for example, young people, landlords, businesses, renters).

The main part of the Forum involved interactive ‘world café’ style activities where participants were invited to discuss, refine and add actions grouped under five key themes:

- **Community-led actions and initiatives** - Ideas that could be actioned by individual community members or local community groups and organisations
- **Council partnerships and advocacy** - Ideas about how Council could be involved in Affordable Housing, or advocate to make more available
- **Financial incentives and disincentives** - Ideas that involve using financial methods to encourage or discourage different housing uses
- **Making housing more affordable** - Ideas about different housing types and options that would be more affordable for people
- **Planning and regulation** - Ideas about how planning rules, processes or other regulations could be changed to support more housing to be developed or available long-term

Over three, 20 minute rounds each small group was tasked with nominating the top three actions that should be prioritised. The purpose of this activity was to encourage the community to consider others perspectives and negotiate. This resulted in a list of broadly agreed (but not necessarily consensus) priority actions for each theme.

Following this, participants were allocated ‘votes’ to cast across all potential ideas, giving people the opportunity to note their personal priorities also. This resulted in a prioritised list of all actions across all themes.



## 2. WHO WE HEARD FROM

In total, 34 people attended the Forum, consisting of representatives from 15 identified key stakeholder organisations and 19 local community members. Many community members were also part of a range (and often multiple) local interest groups and organisations.

Key stakeholder organisations represented included:

- Belle Real Estate
- Central Highlands Integrated Domestic Violence Committee
- Child and Family Services (Ballarat)
- Common Equity Housing
- Daylesford Aged Care - Hepburn House
- Daylesford/ Macedon Tourism
- Department of Transport and Planning (Grampians Region)
- Haven Home Safe
- Hepburn Shire Council Gender Equity Advisory Committee
- Hepburn Shire Council Health and Wellbeing Working Group
- Safe Place Homes Inc
- Trentham Neighbourhood Centre
- Wintringham
- Women's Property Initiative
- Women's Health Grampians

Community members who attended consisted of residents, Hepburn property owners (who don't live in the Hepburn Shire property they own), local employees and local business owners. They also had connections with the following local community group and organisations:

- Airbnb (Goldfields region)
- Ballarat Writers Creswick Branch Writing Group
- Daylesford Country Retreats
- Glenlyon CFA
- Glenlyon Progress Association
- Grounded Community Land Trust Advocacy
- Hepburn Relocalisation Network
- Melliodora (Permaculture) Publishing/Manager
- Safe Place Homes
- Safe Place Homes
- U3A Hepburn Shire
- Woodduck Community Fireguard

### 3. OVERALL FINDINGS

#### 3.1 Group-prioritised actions

The broadly agreed (but not necessarily consensus) priority actions for identified for each theme are outlined below.

Theme	Group-prioritised actions
<b>Community-led actions and initiatives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A community built tiny home project</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the economic benefits of affordable housing for workers and locals</li> <li>• Support Home Share programs/ multi-generation accommodation arrangements</li> <li>• Provide a building co-operative that raises funds to build and manage Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Support research and share learnings from other organisations, for example Garden City housing <a href="https://eeba.org/the-10-traits-of-a-sustainable-city-and-eco-friendly-urban-planning">https://eeba.org/the-10-traits-of-a-sustainable-city-and-eco-friendly-urban-planning</a></li> <li>• Support a community group with focus on developing solutions and fundraising and implementing, for example Safe Place Homes inc.</li> <li>• Incentivise better utilisation of existing houses, for example retrofit and share (existing homes into 2 or 3 dwellings, multigenerational accommodation arrangements)</li> </ul>
<b>Council partnerships and advocacy</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for an overhaul of the housing registration system - community housing compliance requirements/Office of the Housing Registrar</li> <li>• Advocate for planning provisions for smaller lots and more affordable housing</li> <li>• Advocate for State Government to allow/enable mandatory Affordable Housing contributions (through the planning scheme)</li> <li>• Advocate to State and Federal Government for funding to the Affordable Housing sector</li> <li>• Identify and provide government land (local, state, federal) and buildings that could be used for Affordable Housing</li> <li>• Establish a working group/reference group with broad membership to guide and drive the response to Affordable Housing</li> </ul>
<b>Financial incentives and disincentives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge short-term rental accommodation commercial or higher rates</li> <li>• Vacant property tax - house, land, established/residential (rates)</li> <li>• Advocate for changes to tax settings so negative gearing is only allowed for long-term rentals (tax system)</li> <li>• Reduce rates for Affordable Housing - NFP, community housing providers</li> <li>• Diversify economy - reduce reliance on tourism and local jobs (through incentives)</li> </ul>
<b>Making housing more affordable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support development of lower-cost housing for young people and local people ineligible for social housing (smaller, lower maintenance, sustainable, low running costs)</li> <li>• Match owners of single occupant houses (3-5 bedrooms) to adopt a key worker as a boarder/rent</li> <li>• Allow tiny home plots and villages near townships where people can rent the land</li> <li>• Encourage the development of a retirement village (swimming pool, cinema)</li> <li>• Advocate for, and support through planning, innovative housing models, like communal or co-living models – use public/private partnerships (community land</li> </ul>

	trusts and owners corporations) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community-owned retirement village (with diverse home options)</li> <li>• Repurpose/retrofit existing buildings and spaces</li> <li>• Sustainable housing to free up household income - more to spend on buying the house (cheap/low-cost to run the home)</li> </ul>
<b>Planning and regulation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the planning scheme* to allow infill (granny flats, second dwellings) and apartments while protecting heritage streetscapes (<i>*It was noted that this is currently allowed through the planning scheme and therefore there needs to be education about this in the community</i>)</li> <li>• Negotiate for Affordable Housing to be provided as part of rezoning proposals or development applications and strengthen policy and advocate to state for mandatory contributions</li> <li>• Improve internal processes to fast-track planning applications and provide support to applicants</li> <li>• Allow second dwellings including tiny houses on large blocks of land (farmland)</li> <li>• Reduce heritage overlays to allow existing buildings to be more useable</li> <li>• Put a cap on (manage) short-term rental accommodation</li> <li>• Change local law 2 to allow people to have an onsite caravan and offer it as long-term accommodation</li> <li>• Multi-level affordable high density housing in appropriate locations</li> </ul>

### 3.2 Individually-prioritised actions

The top 16 actions that received the most number of votes by individual forum participants are outlined below.

Action idea	votes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for, and support through planning, innovative housing models, like communal or co-living models – use public/private partnerships (community land trusts and owners corporations)</li> </ul>	15
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi-level affordable high density housing in appropriate locations</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incentivise better utilisation of existing houses, for example retrofit and share (existing homes into 2 or 3 dwellings, multigenerational accommodation arrangements)</li> </ul>	10
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for State Government to allow/enable mandatory Affordable Housing contributions (through the planning scheme)</li> </ul>	9
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identify and provide government land (local, state, federal) and buildings that could be used for Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate for Affordable Housing to be provided as part of rezoning proposals or development applications and strengthen policy and advocate to state for mandatory contributions</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Change the planning scheme* to allow infill (granny flats, second dwellings) and apartments while protecting heritage streetscapes (<i>*It was noted that this is currently allowed through the planning scheme and therefore there needs to be education about this in the community</i>)</li> </ul>	7
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incremental rates for multi-property owners</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support Home Share programs /multi-generation accommodation arrangements</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a building co-operative that raises funds to build and manage Affordable Housing</li> </ul>	6
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advocate for alternative building methods that are affordable</li> </ul>	6

• Establish a working group/reference group with broad membership to guide and drive the response to Affordable Housing	5
• Advocate to State and Federal Government for funding to the Affordable Housing sector	4
• Advocate for an overhaul of the housing registration system - community housing compliance requirements/Office of the Housing Registrar	4
• Encourage the development of a retirement village (swimming pool, cinema)	4
• Match owners of single occupant houses (3-5 bedrooms) to adopt a key worker as a boarder/rent	4

### 3.3 Individually-prioritised themes

The below table shows the number of votes by individual forum participants on each theme.

Theme/topic	votes
<b>Making housing more affordable</b> - Ideas about different housing types and options that would be more affordable for people	41
<b>Planning and regulation</b> - Ideas about how planning rules, processes or other regulations could be changed to support more housing to be developed or available long-term	34
<b>Council partnerships and advocacy</b> - Ideas about how Council could be involved in Affordable Housing, or advocate to make more available	31
<b>Community-led actions and initiatives</b> - Ideas that could be actioned by individual community members or local community groups and organisations	23
<b>Financial incentives and disincentives</b> - Ideas that involve using financial methods to encourage or discourage different housing uses	15
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>144</b>

## 4. FINDINGS PER THEME

This section presents the detailed findings across each theme. Text in purple represents amendments made to Stage 1 engagement actions or new actions made at the Forum.

### 4.1 Making housing more affordable

#### Actions prioritised by individual votes

Action idea	votes
Advocate for, and support through planning, innovative housing models, like communal or co-living models – use public/private partnerships (community land trusts and owners corporations)	15
Advocate for alternative building methods that are affordable	6
Encourage the development of a retirement village (swimming pool, cinema)	4
Match owners of single occupant houses (3-5 bedrooms) to adopt a key worker as a boarder/rent	4
Support development of lower-cost housing for young people and local people ineligible for social housing (smaller, lower maintenance, sustainable, low running cost)	3
Support the development of small/tiny houses and movable houses	3
Allow tiny home plots and villages near townships for people to rent the land	2
Investigate spaces above shops and in factories for housing	1
Encourage the development of a retirement village (swimming pool, cinema)	1
Support development of small houses	1
Repurpose/retrofit existing buildings and spaces	1
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>41</b>

#### List of all actions

1. Allow tiny home plots and villages near townships for people to rent the land
2. Release land for sale directly to low-income earners to build
3. Explore options for key worker housing (e.g. apartments/units/tiny homes for hospitality workers)
4. Investigate spaces above shops and in factories for housing
5. Advocate for alternative building methods that are affordable
6. Support development of lower-cost housing for young people and local people ineligible for social housing (smaller, lower maintenance, sustainable, low running cost)
7. Support the development of small/tiny houses and movable houses
8. Encourage the development of a retirement village (swimming pool, cinema)
9. Work with the water board to allow sustainable black water/composting toilet systems in un-sewered areas and allow for smaller subdivisions to facilitate development of alternative housing
10. Advocate for, and support through planning, innovative housing models, like communal or co-living models – use public/private partnerships (community land trusts and owners corporations)
11. Build units on church owned land (make it the law)
12. Match owners of single occupant houses (3-5 bedrooms) to adopt a key worker as a boarder/rent
13. Community-owned retirement village (with diverse home options)
14. Support development of small houses
15. Repurpose/retrofit existing buildings and spaces
16. Sustainable housing to free up household income - more to spend on buying the house (cheap/low-cost to run home)

## 4.2 Planning and regulation

### Actions prioritised by individual votes

Action idea	votes
Multi-level affordable high density housing in appropriate locations	10
Negotiate for Affordable Housing to be provided as part of rezoning proposals or development applications and strengthen policy and advocate to state for mandatory contribution	7
Change/educate* the planning scheme to allow infill (granny flats, second dwellings) and apartments while protecting heritage streetscapes (*It was noted that this is currently allowed through the planning scheme and therefore there needs to be education about this in the community)	7
Improve internal processes to fast-track planning applications and provide support to applicants	3
All new private builds have restrictions on short-term accommodation use	2
Zone areas for short-term rental accommodation	2
Put a cap on (manage) short-term rental accommodation	2
Allow second dwellings including tiny houses on large blocks of land (farmland)	1
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>34</b>

### List of all actions

1. Improve internal processes to fast-track planning applications and provide support to applicants
2. Re-zone farmland to deliver out-of-town housing developments
3. Change/educate\* the planning scheme to allow infill (granny flats, second dwellings) and apartments while protecting heritage streetscapes (\*It was noted that this is currently allowed through the planning scheme and therefore there needs to be education about this in the community)
4. Allow second dwellings including tiny houses on large blocks of land (farmland)
5. Allow second dwellings for relatives
6. Reduce heritage overlays to allow existing buildings to be more useable
7. All new private builds have restrictions on short-term accommodation use
8. Zone areas for short-term rental accommodation
9. Reduce planning requirements to make it more cost effective to develop. Allow lower-cost developments.
10. Put a cap on (manage) short-term rental accommodation
11. Change local law 2 to allow people to have an onsite caravan and offer it as long-term accommodation
12. 50% of all investment properties (other than Principal Place of Residence) must be rented on the long-term rental market.
13. Encourage the development of 4+ bedroom homes to rent
14. Work with the private sector to increase the amount of commercial tourism accommodation by streamlining the planning permit process. This will in time reduce demand for short-term rental accommodation in houses.
15. Negotiate for Affordable Housing to be provided as part of rezoning proposals or development applications and strengthen policy and advocate to state for mandatory contribution
16. Make sure town structure plans address the need for a range of housing for poor people.
17. Multi-level affordable high density housing in appropriate locations
18. Medium density housing
19. Housing supply - council to monitor supply
20. Regulations should allow living in caravans and sheds at present

### 4.3 Council partnerships and advocacy

#### Actions prioritised by individual votes

Action idea	votes
Advocate for State Government to allow/enable mandatory Affordable Housing contributions (through the planning scheme)	9
Identify and provide government land (local, state, federal) and buildings that could be used for Affordable Housing	7
Establish a working group/reference group with broad membership to guide and drive the response to Affordable Housing	5
Advocate to State and Federal Government for funding to the Affordable Housing sector	4
Advocate for an overhaul of the housing registration system - community housing compliance requirements/Office of the Housing Registrar	4
Advocate to State Government to fund appropriate organisations (not Council) to deliver Affordable Housing	1
Participate in Homes Victoria's Affordable Housing Rental Scheme	1
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>31</b>

#### List of all actions

1. Provide land and partner with Housing organisations, State and Federal Government and investors to enable them to build Affordable Housing
2. Direct investment into social housing and emergency housing
3. Advocate to State Government to fund appropriate organisations (not Council) to deliver Affordable Housing
4. Participate in Homes Victoria's Affordable Housing Rental Scheme
5. Use vacant government owned buildings like the REX, caretaker's cottage at Park Lake or the old police station for Affordable Housing
6. Identify vacant and under-utilised dwellings: Investigate why they're empty and options to leverage them for emergency accommodation and long-term affordable accommodation (Council audit of Council land and other government land)
7. Advocate with other councils for mandatory Affordable Housing contributions
8. Encourage Super Funds to invest in social housing/ecovillage developments
9. Advocate for change to planning provisions to support smaller, affordable housing
10. Crisis and transitional housing partnerships
11. Advocate to overhaul Office of the Housing Registrar registration requirements
12. Let's learn from Councils with the same problems - what are the solutions to the shortage of housing?
13. Declaration of a Key and Essential Worker Housing Crisis
14. Structure plans
15. Government subsidy
16. Council facilitate a partnership of local housing players to solve local problems (banks, real estate agents, businesses, community housing providers, developers)
17. Work with DEECA to identify underutilised and serviced land, or example Hepburn caravan park for housing - even if quality relocatable dwellings
18. Advocate for an overhaul of the housing registration system - community housing compliance requirements/Office of the Housing Registrar
19. Advocate for planning provisions for smaller lots and more affordable housing
20. Advocate for State Government to allow/enable mandatory Affordable Housing contributions (through the planning scheme)
21. Advocate to State and Federal Government for funding to the Affordable Housing sector
22. Identify and provide government land (local, state, federal) and buildings that could be used for Affordable Housing

23. Establish a working group/reference group with broad membership to guide and drive the response to Affordable Housing

## 4.4 Community-led actions and initiatives

### Actions prioritised by individual votes

Action idea	votes
Incentivise better utilisation of existing houses, for example retrofit and share (existing homes into 2 or 3 dwellings, multigenerational accommodation arrangements)	10
Support Home Share programs/ multi-generation accommodation arrangements	6
Provide a building co-operative that raises funds to build and manage Affordable Housing	6
Support a community group with focus on developing solutions and fundraising and implementing, for example Safe Place Homes inc.	1
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>23</b>

### List of all actions

1. Retrofit existing larger homes into two or three smaller separate dwellings
2. A community built tiny home project
3. Financial literacy programs and tenant education programs
4. Raise awareness of the economic benefits of affordable housing for workers and locals
5. Support Home Share programs/ multi-generation accommodation arrangements
6. Encourage businesses to pay their staff more so they can afford accommodation
7. Provide a building co-operative that raises funds to build and manage Affordable Housing
8. We have enough housing. We need to make existing housing available for long-term rent
9. Support research and share learnings from other organisations, for example Garden City housing <https://eeba.org/the-10-traits-of-a-sustainable-city-and-eco-friendly-urban-planning>
10. More options to choose from, promoting suitable accommodation.
11. Community philanthropy to 'bridge the gap' when rents rise (transition)
12. Support a community group with focus on developing solutions and fundraising and implementing, for example Safe Place Homes inc.
13. Incentivise better utilisation of existing houses, for examples retrofit and share (existing homes into 2 or 3 dwellings, multigenerational accommodation arrangements)
14. We're an innovative lighthouse shire - let's address climate change in affordable housing

## 4.5 Financial incentives and disincentives

### Actions prioritised by individual votes

Action idea	votes
Incremental rates for multi-property owners	6
Increase rates on luxury high-value properties	3
Incentivise short-term accommodation owners to transition to long-term rentals - can council afford it? Rental return?	2
Vacant property tax - house, land, established/residential (rates)	1
Advocate for changes to tax settings so negative gearing is only allowed for long-term rentals (tax system)	1
Reduce rates for Affordable Housing – Not-For-Profit, community housing providers	1
Diversify economy – reduce reliance on tourism and local jobs (through incentives)	1
<b>Total votes</b>	<b>15</b>

### List of all actions

1. Charge short-term rental accommodation commercial or higher rates
2. Initiate a tax, or advocate for a tax, on short-term rental accommodation
3. Incremental rates for multi-property owners
4. Vacant property tax - house, land, established/residential (rates)
5. Offer grants to repair vacant houses to provide as long-term affordable rentals
6. Incentivise short-term accommodation owners to transition to long-term rentals - can council afford it?  
Rental return?
7. Increase rates on luxury high-value properties
8. Advocate for changes to tax settings so negative gearing is only allowed for long-term rentals (tax system)
9. Advocate to reduce taxes on developments that offer Affordable Housing
10. Advocate to the government to allow people to access their superannuation during the recession
11. Reduce rates for Affordable Housing – Not-For-Profit, community housing providers
12. Visitor/tourism/gate tax
13. Incentivise small secondary dwellings on existing land - granny flats
14. Incentive for utilities, infrastructure servicing costs, head work, connection cost substantial
15. Diversify economy – reduce reliance on tourism and local jobs (through incentives)