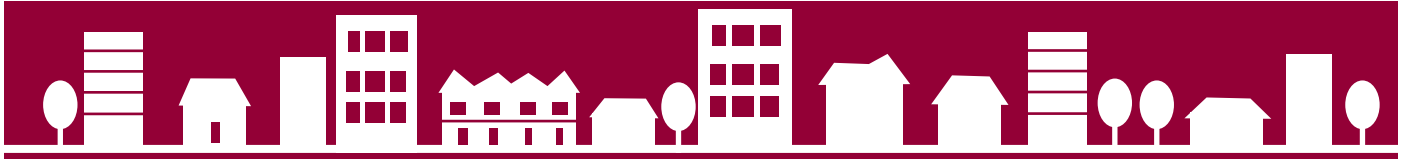


Practice Note for Developers

a toolkit for affordable housing for women



The purpose of this practice note is:

- To encourage developers to negotiate with Councils to achieve a mutually beneficial outcome with regard to the development of diverse housing products that are affordable and well located.
- To assist developers in preparing planning permit applications to Councils so that a net community benefit is achieved with the provision of well designed and located affordable housing that is needed by women.



Design Objectives

WHAT is well-located, affordable housing for women?

A range of different housing types that provide safe and familiar environments for women and their families. It can contribute to economic security, physical well-being and social inclusion for individuals and communities.



WHAT does well-located, affordable housing for women LOOK LIKE?

MUST be diverse in housing type to meet women's needs.

Are a number of housing types proposed?

Is there a range in the number of bedrooms in the housing types provided?

Is there flexibility in the floor plan design provided/allowed for?

MUST be secure, safe and provide long term tenure opportunities.

Is the dwelling or building entry visible from the street and well lit?

Is the landscaping appropriate (i.e. limited 'hiding' opportunities)?

How has the dwelling incorporated security and safety measures?

MUST be of a quality that integrates with the surrounding neighbourhood.

Does the housing 'blend' with adjoining housing in appearance?

MUST be accessible.

Have all pathways, accessways, entry points and basements been designed to cater for prams and disabled access?

MUST be provided with open spaces that offer passive recreation and opportunities for engagement with others.

Are the open spaces readily accessible from main accessways?

Is the space sheltered, well lit and useable?



Social Objectives

WHO is well-located affordable housing for women FOR?

MUST provide suitable accommodation for women.

(Meeting the objectives outlined above would demonstrate a high degree of suitability for women).

MUST cater to lower and middle-income earners.

What elements of the design have been included to ensure the housing is available to many demographic sectors?

How does the proposal demonstrate long term sustainability, and a commitment to reducing ongoing household costs?

WHERE is well-located, affordable housing?

MUST have good access to a range of employment opportunities.

Does the housing have good access to public transport (multiple modes preferred)?

MUST be near public transport (multiple modes preferred).

MUST have good access to local services such as educational, childcare and retail facilities.

Is the proposal within reasonable walking distance of these facilities?

MUST be integrated, not isolated, from other residential areas.

How is the housing connected to other residential areas?

Actions

- Lobby Local Government Associations and the State Government to encourage them to develop clear policy and guidelines to assist with making affordable housing feasible and a reality.
- State Government authorities need to demonstrate commitment to supporting affordable housing and provide an action plan for well-located, affordable housing.
- Key relationships with Councils are important: to the success and delivery of affordable housing; to obtaining approvals in a timely manner; and to help reduce land-holding costs before market release.
- Understanding women's needs and wants is important to achieve successful low-cost housing products.
- Master planning should take place for major sites, setting out the preferred yield and clarifying Council's objectives and requirements.
- Consider undertaking developments via a public-private partnership.
- Emphasise housing diversity in applications to Council.
- Form partnerships with Councils and service providers for projects that are commercially viable and socially beneficial.
- Build relationships with Council officers.
- Be innovative with design to incorporate lower cost housing that is indistinguishable from market priced housing.
- Seek development sites that are located within close proximity to social networks and services.
- Seek locations with good access to public transport, activity centres and open spaces.
- Take up opportunities to contribute towards research for, and development of, housing strategies.



Key Facts

Key facts and figures presented by the Australian Housing & Urban Research Institute, 2005 include:

- Forty-six percent of women who are sole parents own their own home compared with 60% of sole male parents.
- Ninety-four percent of women consider themselves head of the household and, of these women, 36% are the sole person responsible - 61% are jointly responsible.
- In 2002-03, private rental housed 40 % of sole parent families.
- As of June 2004, 62% of total income support recipients were women.



Department of Planning
Victoria and Community Development
The Place To Be

This practice note was developed by the Women's Planning Network and Beca Planning in consultation with developers and policy makers, women's groups, housing associations and women who are seeking housing. For further information on the research see the WPN website www.wpn.org.au/research.

