

# Practice Note for Planners

a toolkit for affordable housing for women



The purpose of this practice note is:

- To assist planners in supporting the supply and availability of well-located, affordable housing opportunities for women.
- To assist planning and housing strategy formulation and implementation.
- To assist decision-making on planning applications for residential development.



## 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

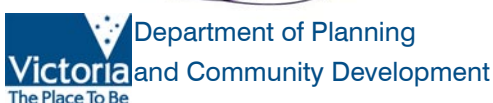
- Encourage the implementation of clear policies and guidelines addressing housing affordability in State Planning Policy and other State Government policies.
- Review the Municipal Strategic Statement to ensure that well-located, affordable housing is a priority, including initiatives for growth and density intensification.
- Use the planning scheme tools that currently have capacity to improve provision of affordable housing. For example, review minimal change area policies and car parking requirements within the planning scheme to allow exemptions when developments demonstrate high levels of sustainability and diversity, which contribute to affordability.
- Using the above Objectives, develop a checklist for assessing housing planning permit applications.
- Negotiate with developers to provide affordable housing within developments.
- Provide all staff with information and resources to assist their understanding of housing issues.
- Encourage networking opportunities and constructive sessions with developers and service providers to assist local council, service providers and private developers to form partnerships for improved affordable housing provision.
- Engage the community in dialogue about housing strategies and needs in the municipality.



## Key Facts

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

- 46% of women who are sole parents own their own home compared with 60% of sole male parents.
- 94% 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.



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](http://www.wpn.org.au/research).

