

Practice Note for Service Providers

a toolkit for affordable housing for women



The purpose of this practice note is:

- To assist service providers in effectively supplying and providing affordable housing to 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

- Be an active stakeholder and encourage the implementation of clear policies and guidelines addressing housing affordability at State Planning Policy and other State Government levels.
- Develop relationships with Councils and developers to facilitate the provision of affordable housing, with strong representation of women's needs in its design, development and provision.
- Provide information that educates women, enabling them to be proactive about finding and negotiating for accommodation.
- Lobby State and Federal Government for assistance for housing provision.
- Seek feedback from women who have recently found affordable housing and continue to learn from their (changing) situation.
- Set minimum requirements in partnerships with Councils and developers for affordable housing provision that is commercially viable and socially beneficial.
- Advocate for Real Estate Institutes/Agents to offer extended leasing arrangements (increase from 12 months to five years) to provide increased rental housing security.



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.



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.

