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Executive Summary

Recently the rental market in Casey has become very tight, expensive and competitive. Rental housing used to provide affordable accommodation for low income households. Low income households include single persons, couples, people on pensions and financially stressed single and dual parent families. As a result of declining affordability across all housing types, low income households are now being pushed out of the Casey housing market.

Low income households have very limited options for secure and affordable accommodation within Casey. This has led to the rise in rooming houses. The number of registered rooming houses in Casey has doubled in the past 18 months. Like in other parts of Victoria, Casey is experiencing situations where some rooming house operators are taking advantage of vulnerable people and exploiting their ability to access affordable, safe and secure accommodation.

The City of Casey is responding to this issue by preparing a policy. The policy will aim to improve current processes in enforcement to balance the impact that enforcement will have on tenants, particularly when a rooming house is closed and tenants become displaced. Council also intends to prepare objectives and guidelines to improve the quality and supply of accommodation available in Casey for those who cannot afford to access private rental housing.

Literature suggests that people who have access to affordable, safe and secure accommodation are happier, healthier and more engaged in the community. The more income one earns the more affordable housing becomes. The City of Casey has typically higher levels of unemployment and low-skilled workers than other areas in Melbourne and lower income levels. The cost of living in Casey is also relatively higher. A significant number of households are stressed as a result. Casey has relatively poorer levels of health than other parts of Melbourne, with high rates of preventable diseases and psychological distress. Housing stress contributes to a poorer health profile.

Across Australia, single women and older people are most vulnerable to homelessness, especially when their income levels inhibit their ability to access accommodation. In Casey, these groups are growing substantially. Young people, another growing population group, are also at risk. There is a limited supply of smaller, one and two bedroom housing, and of affordable rental accommodation. These groups often have no alternative but to leave Casey to find suitable accommodation.

The City of Casey has consulted with a range of stakeholders to identify the local issues relating to rooming houses. Council held a range of workshops with professional stakeholders and produced a survey for residents on the preferences for housing in Casey, including preferences for public, social and affordable housing. The key issues identified through consultation are:

- There is a limited supply of more appropriate, affordable accommodation for vulnerable people, especially children, people with mental health issues and elderly people.
- Rooming houses in Casey are not necessarily affordable.
- Lack of appropriate affordable housing supply in Casey makes rooming tenants more vulnerable to living in poor conditions for fear of eviction and homelessness.
- New regulations are likely to inhibit operators establishing more rooming houses in Casey, especially in existing dwellings.
- The types of rooming houses, management structures and tenancy arrangements are varied and complex, which is confusing for organisations providing support to tenants.
The regulatory framework is complex and inconsistent. In particular, there is a gap in the Planning context, which impedes Council’s decision-making for rooming house proposals.

The Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper will inform the development of a policy on rooming houses. The policy will include a Policy Directions Paper and Implementation Strategy, as well as a Local Planning Policy to be included in the *Casey Planning Scheme*. 
1. **Introduction**

1.1. **Context**

The rental market in Casey is very tight. This contributes to an increased use and demand for other forms of accommodation including in rooming houses and shared housing.

Rooming houses are an accommodation choice typically for people who cannot otherwise afford to access rental housing. Rooming houses have been a common accommodation form in inner Melbourne for a long time. More recently, smaller models of rooming houses have spread through the middle and outer suburbs of Melbourne.

Rooming houses are relatively new in Casey. Rooming houses are primarily being used by singles and couples, but also by families in crisis.

The number of rooming houses in Casey is increasing in direct response to Casey’s tight rental market.

1.2. **Why is the City of Casey thinking about rooming houses?**

The Casey Affordable Housing Taskforce (2009-2010) was established to assist Council in identifying and responding to issues relating to housing affordability within the municipality.

Some of the key concerns of the Taskforce relating to rooming houses were:
- The emergence of rooming houses in the City of Casey both registered and unregistered.
- The impacts that can arise for tenant living in sub-standard accommodation.
- The social impacts for tenants when rooming houses are closed and tenants must find alternative accommodation.

Council resolved to prepare a Rooming House Policy on 7 June 2011. The second milestone of the Rooming House Policy is complete, which included the completion of the bulk of community consultation, the completion of the Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper and the commencement of the Policy Directions Paper.

The City of Casey is thinking about rooming houses to:
- Improve its own processes in registering and enforcing rooming houses in the municipality.
- Consider the social impacts for tenants when a rooming house is closed.
- Consider the types, quality and supply of rooming house accommodation available in Casey for people who cannot afford or access private rental housing.
- Guide the planning and design of future development of rooming houses in Casey.

1.3. **Policy Structure**

The Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper will inform policy development on rooming houses. It will focus on the types of housing available for people who cannot afford or access typical forms of private rental housing.

Council will also be reviewing the adopted *Casey Housing Diversity Statement* to include objectives designed to improve the quality and supply of housing for people who cannot afford or access private rental housing.

The policy on rooming houses will be the first sub-policy in the ‘Housing with Respect’ series. The series will focus on particular topics of housing policy where there are limited housing choices for vulnerable people in the community.
2. **What is a rooming house?**

2.1. **Historic reference**

Rooming houses were common in the inner suburbs of Melbourne in the early twentieth century. Traditionally, rooming houses were a common and relatively attractive form of purpose-built accommodation. Traditional rooming houses typically housed single men (and women to a lesser extent) as well as travellers within shared facilities and communal living areas.

An increase in community expectations regarding privacy, gentrification of the inner suburbs and increased maintenance costs led to the decline of rooming houses from the 1920s.

In the early 1980s, the Victorian Director of Housing launched a Rooming House Program, which continues to provide affordable accommodation for singles today. The program includes over 100 not-for-profit rooming houses across metropolitan Melbourne, owned and managed by the Director of Housing with the community sector.

In more recent times, the private rental housing market has been failing to supply accommodation that is affordable to those on low incomes or pensions. This has
contributed to the emergence of a new model of smaller private rooming houses which have spread across the middle and outer suburbs of Melbourne.

New model rooming houses usually use larger suburban homes, modified to create more bedrooms to accommodate more people. New model rooming houses are generally run for profit. In some circumstances they operate unlawfully (i.e. not registered with Council or compliant with regulations).

2.2. Definitions under various Acts and policies

There is no consistent legislative or common definition for ‘rooming house’.

This lack of clarity has confused policy makers and led to compromised enforcement under a range of Victorian Acts of Parliament which prescribe tenancy, health, building and planning for rooming houses.

Both the Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) and the former Health Act 1953 defined rooming houses; however, the definitions were not consistent.

In 2008, when the Victorian Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 superseded the Health Act 1953, the definition of a rooming house (‘prescribed accommodation’) was aligned to the definition in the RTA. In both, a rooming house is defined as:

A building in which there is one or more rooms available for occupancy on payment of rent –

(a) in which the total number of people who may occupy those rooms is not less than 4; or

(b) in respect of which a declaration under section 19(2) or (3) is in force. (S3, RTA).

Council has no powers under the RTA.

2.2.1. Health

In the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 (PHWA), ‘prescribed accommodation’ means:

Any of the following which is prescribed, or is of a class which is prescribed, to be prescribed accommodation

(a) any area of land which a person or persons are frequently, intermittently or seasonally permitted to use for camping on payment of consideration and any facilities provided on the land for the use of that person or those persons;

(b) any premises used as a place of abode, whether temporary or permanent, fixed or mobile, where a person or persons can be accommodated on payment of consideration;

(c) any accommodation provided to an employee in accordance with a term of an award governing the employment of the employee, or a term of the employee’s contract of service, for use by the employee during that employment or service. (S3, PHWA)

In the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009 (PHWR), a rooming house means:

A building in which there is one or more rooms available for occupancy on payment of rent in which the total number of people who may occupy that room or those rooms is not less than 4. (Reg 4, PHWR)

Council’s Environmental Health Officers have powers under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to require registration of
rooming houses and other forms of prescribed accommodation. Environmental Health Officers can carry out inspections and enforce regulations under the Public Health and Wellbeing Regulations 2009.

2.2.2. Building

In the Building Code of Australia (BCA), rooming houses can be either Class 1b or Class 3 buildings, where:

A Class 1b building is:

A boarding house, guest house, hostel or the like –

(a) with a total area of all floors not exceeding 300m² measured over the enclosing walls of the Class 1b; and

(b) in which not more than 12 persons would ordinarily be resident. (Part A3, BCA)

A Class 3 building is:

A residential building, other than a building of Class 1 or 2, which is a common place of long term or transient living for a number of unrelated persons, including a boarding house, guest house, hostel, lodging house or backpackers accommodation.

Council’s Municipal Building Surveyor has powers to enforce building regulations through the Building Act 1993, Building Regulations 2006 and Building Code of Australia.

2.2.3. Planning

Some rooming houses require a planning permit under the Casey Planning Scheme. There is no definition of a rooming house in the Planning and Environment Act 1987, or in the Victoria Planning Provisions (Clause 74 of the Casey Planning Scheme).

‘Boarding house’ is identified as a type of residential use in the Victoria Planning Provisions; however, it does not have a specific definition.

2.3. Common characteristics of rooming houses

Rooming houses can vary in their size, model and form, target tenant groups and management structures. The Rooming House Standards Taskforce Chairperson’s Report identified some of the common characteristics of rooming houses, as:

- Primarily single room accommodation.
- Shared access to common facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and living areas.
- No formal supports are present on the premises.
- The owner and their family generally do not live on the premises, and
- Increasingly used by long-term homeless people or those in housing crisis.

2.4. How the City of Casey defines rooming houses

The City of Casey will use the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 definition of a rooming house for the purposes of the Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper and the policy on rooming houses. However, it is noted that the definition has limitations in the following circumstances:

- A rooming house with less than 4 persons will still need to meet Council’s Building requirements, but not Planning or Health requirements.
- A rooming house with 10 or less habitable rooms does not necessarily need to meet Council’s Planning
requirements and apply for a planning permit.

- Other forms of housing that may appear to qualify for exemption of registration as a rooming house or prescribed accommodation may not meet the requirements for exemption.

3. Legislative and policy context

3.1. National level

The Commonwealth of Australia influences housing and housing affordability through the following vehicles:

- National Affordable Housing Agreement;
- Regulation of the Australian Tax System;
- Providing funding and income assistance including grants and funding programs to deliver additional public and not-for-profit housing stock; and
- Income assistance for individuals and families from Centrelink.

The Commonwealth’s mechanisms prioritize housing affordability and typically target low to moderate income earners.

The aim of the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) National Affordable Housing Agreement is to ensure all Australians have access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing. The current Agreement comes to an end in 2013 and work has begun to prepare a new agreement.

In 2010 the Commonwealth Government released ‘Regulation and Growth of the Not-For-Profit Housing Sector: Discussion Paper’ to consider mechanisms to increase the availability of affordable housing in Australia through the not-for-profit sector. The Discussion Paper emphasises the need to increase the supply of rental accommodation for low and moderate income earners. Mechanisms are designed to facilitate a flow-on impact in the private sector housing market.

The National Partnership Agreement on Social Housing aims to achieve three main outcomes:

- People being able to rent housing that meets their needs;
- People who are homeless or at risk of homelessness being able to access sustainable housing and social inclusion; and
- Indigenous people having improved housing amenity and reduced overcrowding.

- The agreement facilitated a Social Housing Growth Fund to deliver additional social housing dwellings across Australia.

Other initiatives facilitated by the Federal Government include the Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package – Social Housing Construction, the Housing Affordability Fund and the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS). New and proposed private and not-for-profit developments in Casey have attracted investment from both Nation Building Economic Stimulus Package and NRAS.

The Casey Gardens development proposal in Narre Warren received the largest allocation of NRAS funding of all projects in Victoria. The project is being developed by a private company and is yet to commence construction. Such initiatives can contribute to improving the supply of quality, affordable accommodation for vulnerable people in Casey.

3.2. State level

The Victorian Government has a direct role in providing:

- housing in Victoria (public and social housing);
- planning for housing growth in the private market; and
- regulating and enforcing appropriate planning, building, health, tenancy and equity outcomes relating to housing and personal health, safety and wellbeing.
3.2.1. **State Legislation**

Several pieces of Victorian legislation impact on housing, including:

- The Housing Act 1983 establishes the procedures, provisions and funding for public and social housing.
- The Residential Tenancies Act 1997 (RTA) outlines the rights and responsibilities of tenants, landlords and other relevant parties to tenancy in accommodation, including rental housing, and rooming house rental.
- The Local Government Act 1989 establishes responsibility of land use planning with local government.
- The Planning and Environment Act 1987 establishes Council as the planning authority for land-use planning and the Growth Areas Authority as the planning authority for growth areas. The Act enables the Planning Scheme in State-wide and local planning policy frameworks.
- The Building Act 1993, Building Regulations 2006 and the Building Code of Australia, together establish particular building Classes and relevant initial (permit) and ongoing (maintenance) requirements for buildings.


Under the regulations, all shared areas and at least one bedroom in a rooming house must be fully accessible for a wheelchair. An accessible car park space also needs to be provided with level access from the space to the entrance of the rooming house.

The Registered Accommodation Association (RAAV) of Victoria believes the cost of required modifications will detrimentally impact the supply and affordability of rooming houses.

![Photo 4: Excelsior Hall, Port Melbourne, Redeveloped Hall as a Community Rooming House](image)

Changes to the RTA have also been proposed through the Proposed Residential Tenancies (Rooming House Standards) Regulations Regulatory Impact Statement, released in August 2011. The Regulatory Impact Statement proposes to include new regulations to cover the following eleven minimum standards in the RTA:

- Fire evacuation diagram, with procedures prominently displayed;
- Switchboard type circuit breakers and residual current devices;
- At least one functional double power outlet in each bedroom;
- Gas and electrical safety checks conducted every 2 and 5 years, respectively;
- Keyless privacy latches on all toilet and bathroom doors;
- Security features (lockable main entrance, securable windows, screen doors);
- Certain rooms must have natural light and natural or mechanical ventilation. All rooms must have sufficient natural or artificial light;
- Fit for purpose window coverings fitted in each bedroom;
• Provision of certain kitchen and dining facilities which are fit for purpose and allow residents to prepare and eat food; and
• Provision of plumbed laundry wash trough or basin (not kitchen sink) and a clothes line or drying facility.

Consumer Affairs Victoria will be responsible for enforcing the new standards, including inspecting properties to assess compliance and taking action to address non-compliance.

Council is supportive of the proposed regulations but is concerned that dual responsibility adds another layer of enforcement to the already complex regulatory framework, particularly as it introduces an organisation other than Council to enforce building and amenity regulations.

3.2.2. Other State Initiatives

The Victorian Government has a number of initiatives, policies and protocols relating to housing, affordable accommodation and rooming houses, including:

• The Housing Establishment Fund (HEF). HEF is funding provided by the Commonwealth Government for homelessness housing and support agencies to assist clients to access and maintain private rental housing. Funding can be used to access emergency short term accommodation, including the Transitional Housing Management Program (THM), the Homelessness Support Program (formerly the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program SAAP) and Crisis Supported Accommodation.

• The Victorian Homelessness Action Plan 2011-2015. The Plan aims to provide early intervention and prevention approaches to homelessness through innovative projects. The Plan establishes a Ministerial Advisory Council on Homelessness to guide future service design, and to achieve a more efficient and effective system for addressing homelessness.

• Tenant and Operator guides for rooming houses, moveable dwellings, caravan parks and private renting. The guides outline the legal rights and responsibilities of tenants and operators under the RTA.

• A best practice handbook, developed in partnership with RAAV, which encourages rooming house operators to deliver a higher standard of living for rooming house tenants than that required by the regulations.

• A Metropolitan Planning Strategy currently being prepared to inform planning for growth and infrastructure across Melbourne.

• The Housing Growth Requirements Project, currently assessing housing capacity of each municipality in Metropolitan Melbourne and identifying opportunities for future growth in infill housing development. The final reports are yet to be released.

3.2.3. Previous State Initiatives

The previous State Government had two major initiatives that promoted housing to meet the needs of the community. The Victorian Integrated Housing Strategy, prepared in 2010 to address all types of housing, including housing for home buyers and renters; social housing and housing for the homeless.

The Strategy aimed to:

• significantly reduce homelessness,
• deliver more affordable housing options,
• increase the supply of social and affordable housing and
• create an efficient and flexible planning system.

The Strategy investigated practical measures to deliver more housing, including the potential to free up surplus Government land for housing as well as integrating the objectives of the Strategy in all Victorian Planning Schemes (Clause 16 Housing). The City of Casey prepared its Housing Diversity Statement 2011 on the basis of Clause 16 of the Casey Planning Scheme.

In 2009, the State Government established the Rooming House Standards Taskforce. The Taskforce was responsible for reviewing legislative requirements for rooming houses and the demand and supply of rooming houses across Victoria.

The Rooming House Standards Taskforce Chairperson’s Report (September 2009) outlined 32 recommendations to the State Government on the standards framework, compliance and enforcement, registration, supply and managing implementation.

The State Government accepted 30 of 32 recommendations and supported working towards meeting the objectives of the remaining two recommendations.

The State Government has provided $77.2 million for initiatives to implement the recommendations of the Taskforce.

Following the Rooming House Standards Taskforce Chairperson’s Report, the State Government prepared the Private Rooming House Closure Protocol Project. The project involved the development of a model Memorandum of Understanding for Councils to use with housing and support agencies in the area to establish a consistent methodology for closing a rooming house and appropriately relocating displaced tenants in alternative accommodation.

3.3. Regional level

The Councils within the Southern Metropolitan Region, in conjunction with the Victorian Government, prepared the Southern Regional Housing Statement in 2006. The Statement identified three categories for where growth could occur, including Greenfield, Brownfield and dispersed residential locations.

Greenfield locations are predominantly located in the Casey and Cardinia Growth Corridor, whereas Brownfield and dispersed residential locations are spread across the region.

The Statement identifies a number of challenges and opportunities relating to improving housing diversity, design and built form, services and infrastructure delivery, housing affordability and employment opportunities. The Statement aims to balance housing development with protection of environmental values.

3.4. Local level

The City of Casey is responsible for the preparation and implementation of policy and strategic documents relating to the municipality. This includes a number of Council-wide plans, including:

• C21: Building A Great City, Council’s long-term strategic plan for the City of Casey promoting housing diversity and choice as key objectives.
• The Council Plan 2009-2013, promoting innovative and responsible planning, liveability, community strengthening, social respect and the safety, health and wellbeing of the community are key strategies.
• The Casey Housing Strategy 2005, outlining the objectives for housing development across the municipality.
• The Casey Housing Diversity Statement 2011, which encourages provision of a wider range of housing options in Casey, particularly one and two bedroom dwellings and accessible dwellings.
• The Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2009-13, which is built around seven key determinants of health and wellbeing, including community safety, income security, the environment, housing (particularly access to affordable housing that meets the needs of the community), transport, education and connectedness.
A range of place-based Development Plans and Structure Plans, which identify opportunities for future housing growth and advocate for improved housing diversity and housing choice.  

The Casey Planning Scheme, including the Municipal Strategic Statement and other local planning policies, which promote and encourage greater housing diversity and choice across the municipality.

Housing affordability, accessibility and choice are key considerations for Council. In 2009, the City of Casey established an Affordable Housing Taskforce to consider and address issues relating to housing affordability in the City of Casey. The Taskforce was particularly concerned with:  

- The lack of affordable rental accommodation in Casey.  
- The lack of housing diversity and choice in Casey, particularly smaller, 1 and 2 bedroom homes and larger, affordable homes for multi-generational families.  
- Unregistered rooming houses.

4. Literature Review

A significant amount of literature exists around the issues of rooming houses and homelessness across Australia. Some of these issues are discussed below.

4.1. Factors leading to homelessness

Factors leading to homelessness can include job loss, illness, relationship breakdown, domestic violence, financial strain and emotional breakdown.

There is a contributory link between financial strain and family violence. Casey has the highest reported rate of family violence in Victoria.

4.2. At-risk groups

Literature suggests older persons and single women are the most at risk in ability to access affordable and secure housing in Australia.

Many older persons over 65 years do not own their home outright, and approximately 20% do not own their home at all.

Retirees with limited superannuation funds, who rely fully on government pensions are particularly at risk of homelessness as a result of not being able to afford continuing mortgage repayments or private rental housing.

The health of older people can be compromised if they are unable to access secure and affordable housing suitable to their needs (e.g. accessible, close to transport, shops, healthcare, etc.).

Historically, women have had lower income levels than men. Women who have taken leave from employment to raise children often have very limited superannuation when they retire.

Single women sometimes choose to stay in unsatisfactory relationships to continue living in conventional housing rather than moving to alternative forms of accommodation like rooming houses. These situations are often referred to as ‘hidden homelessness’.

Domestic violence is a significant issue for women as it compromises their ability to access secure and affordable housing. Women who feel that they have nowhere else to go may continue in a violent relationship rather than being homeless. In some circumstances, children are also involved.

Violence against women is also common in rooming houses, particularly those where men and women (and children) are mixed.

4.3. Intervention

The quality and supply of housing in Australia available to people at risk of homelessness is generally very poor.
The transitory nature of homelessness complicates Governments’ ability to understand the extent of the issue. Those at risk of homelessness are often the most vulnerable people in the community.

In Australia the Government’s role includes:

- Provision of crisis housing.
- Management of supply-side strategies to improve minimum standards of affordable (private) accommodation.
- Provision of grants and loans for individuals and organisations to improve the supply and accessibility of affordable housing for those most in need.

According to R. Cohen and K Wardrip (Planning Commissioners Journal No.83, Summer 2011), creation of affordable, accessible and secure housing has significant economic and fiscal benefits to Governments beyond the obvious social benefits which far outweigh the costs to supply housing. Benefits include:

- Job creation in the construction of housing, as well as ongoing job creation in retail, healthcare and Local Government. Job creation in other industries that are driven by population growth (such as education, utility supplies, community services and transport) is also likely to increase when there is adequate access to affordable, accessible and secure housing in a community. The article also notes that employee attraction and retention is often compromised when housing in the local area is not affordable.
- Payment of property taxes and construction-related economic activity from the development of new homes. The article also notes that the construction of affordable housing is more likely to increase or sustain the value of properties in neighbouring areas, rather than decrease values as is often thought.
- The ability for households to affordably pay housing costs will mean that they are less likely to foreclose on mortgages and other loans. Households are also more likely to pay bills on time and their buying power (disposable income) is increased. This in turn improves the local economy as households are more prepared to spend more of the disposable income rather than saving it in fear of increased housing costs in the future.

5. Demographic Trends

5.1. Population, migration and age structure

The City of Casey has a long history of rapid population growth.

In 2011 the population of Casey was 253,000 persons. It is expected to increase to 450,000 persons by 2036.
The greatest population growth is expected to occur in new suburbs such as Cranbourne East, Botanic Ridge, Clyde North and Clyde. Infill development is also likely to contribute to population growth in the existing urban areas.

The non-urban areas in Casey, Casey Foothills in the north, and Casey Coast in the south, are not likely to experience as strong growth as the urban areas.

Migration patterns indicate people generally move into Casey from the north and west - Greater Dandenong, Monash and Knox municipalities, and to a lesser extent the south east areas of Frankston and Kingston.

Within Casey people typically move to the east within Casey or further into the Shire of Cardinia. People around Hallam, Doveton and Eumemmerring move to new parts of Narre Warren and Berwick, Greater Cranbourne or Pakenham; and people around Greater Cranbourne usually move to new parts of Narre Warren and Berwick or Pakenham. Narre Warren and Berwick are more settled and experience low levels of movement.

Movement patterns in Casey generally reflect socio-economic status and household aspirations. People are often attracted to Casey for one of two reasons: affordability, particularly to buy the first home; and aspirations in respect of the neighbourhood they would ultimately choose to live in. Berwick is an example of a particularly attractive part of Casey. People generally move to Berwick from reasonably affluent areas outside of Casey, or to upsize from other parts of Casey and surrounds.

The majority of population growth in Casey occurs in Cranbourne. Across Melbourne, growth areas generally attract first home buyers and people who want to build their affluence. This is evident in Cranbourne. In 2009 the suburb of Botanic Ridge was created to the south of Cranbourne. The Botanic Ridge housing estate has generally attracted more affluent households, and particularly second and third home buyers. Botanic Ridge may mark a change in the first home owner trend in Casey.

Casey will see significant increases in the ageing population and in young children. The non-urban areas of Casey will continue to attract maturing families, empty nesters and retirees; particularly the coastal parts of Casey. Existing urban areas such as Endeavour Hills, Hallam, Hampton Park and Narre Warren will also experience increases in the ageing population.

New and emerging areas typically attract young families and will therefore see significant population growth in children, particularly in the emerging suburbs of Cranbourne East and Clyde.

### 5.2. Cultural groups

Casey is very culturally diverse. At least 150 cultures are represented and residents follow 120 faiths. Almost one-third of Casey’s residents were born overseas, primarily in non-English speaking countries across the Sub-Continent (India and Sri Lanka), Africa and parts of the United Kingdom and Europe.
In 2011, 320 refugee background migrants settled in Casey, a third from Afghanistan. Other countries of origin of refugees include Iraq, Myanmar (formerly Burma), Sri Lanka and Iran. These figures represent arrivals from other countries who move into Casey upon arriving in Australia. Casey also houses a number of migrants who have moved into other parts of Victoria and Australia before moving into Casey. Changes to cultural mix will become apparent when the 2011 Census data becomes available in June 2012.

One quarter of Casey’s residents speak a language other than English at home, particularly Sinhalese, Spanish, Italian, Arabic, and Serbian. More than 200 languages other than English are spoken in Casey households.

In general, the suburbs of Endeavour Hills, Doveton and Hampton Park have been the most consistently diverse. Recently, pockets of particular ethnic groups have started to form in Casey. For example, the number of Afghans in Casey has been steadily increasing. Those particularly of Hazara background have been moving into Narre Warren South. Afghani families were originally attracted to Casey for affordable housing. Many people of Afghani Hazara background are now choosing to move into Casey from across Australia because of the welcoming environment and community. More than half of the students attending the Narre Warren South P-12 School in 2012 are of Afghani background.

Casey houses the highest number of Indigenous Australians in the south east with approximately 1,500 residents (42.9% of the region). Over half of Indigenous Australians in the south-east region are 18 years of age. Whilst there is a range of public housing allocated specifically for Indigenous Australians (approximately 85 dwellings across Casey, housing 13% of Indigenous households), these properties do not change hands frequently and are allocated primarily to families. Young Indigenous men are particularly at risk of homelessness.
For many reasons, migrants, asylum seekers and “irregular maritime arrivals” face a number of barriers to obtaining appropriate housing. These include:

- A lack of affordable, appropriate and available housing, long public housing waiting lists and reports of discrimination in the private rental market.

- Newly arrived migrants and refugees do not have proof of identity documents required by estate agents and are ill prepared to understand Tenancy Law.

- There is a limit to the number of days that asylum seekers can remain in detention despite the status of their application for refugee status, leaving them to find alternative accommodation without the ability to access income (jobs or pensions), and

- Language barriers (lack of spoken and literacy in English) cause difficulty for people in navigating disjointed housing services, all with their own methods of screening and referring clients.

5.3. Household types

According to the ABS Census 2006, the most common form of household type across Australia is ‘couple without children’. It is expected that this trend is occurring partly as a result of the baby boomer population reaching a life stage where their children have moved out of home. ‘Couple family with dependent children’ is the second most common form of household type across Australia.

Rates of one parent families remain steady at around 10% of all households while rates of lone person households are increasing. Lone person households are expected to increase by an average of 2.2% per year over the next 20 years in Australia.

Currently, couples without children account for 23.8% and lone person households account for 16.9% of total households within Casey.

Families with dependent children make up 61.7% of total households (48.1% dual parent families and 13.6% one parent families) in Casey.
Couples without children account for 23.8% and lone person households account for 16.9% of total households in Casey.

In the next 20 years, the forecast is for an additional 58,500 households in Casey. Family households are projected to remain the primary household type; however, as the population ages and moves through life stages, there will be a more diverse range of household types.

By 2031, forecasts indicate that families with children will account for 59.8% of all households in Casey (46.5% dual parent families and 13.3% one parent families). Couples without children will account for 26.8% of all households and lone person households will account for 18.9% of all households.

5.4. Education and employment

More than half (52.5%) of the population in Casey aged 15 years or more have no qualifications (compared to 45.9% for the Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD)).

A lower proportion of Casey residents have Bachelor or Higher degrees (9.5%) or Advanced Diploma or Diploma (6.8%) (compared to 19.6% and 7.6% for the MSD). A higher proportion of Casey residents have Vocational qualifications at 18.9% of the population (compared to 14.1% of the MSD).

The rate of unemployment in Casey has increased from 4.1% in 2006 to 6.5% in 2010. This is compared to 5.0% in 2006 to 5.4% for the MSD. Unemployment is unevenly spread across the municipality and varies from 2.3% in Cranbourne South and Junction Village to 11.2% in Doveton and Eumemmerring. People living in rooming houses are often unemployed either in the short or long term.

Casey’s main employment industries are Construction, Manufacturing, Retail Trade and Health Care and Social Assistance. These industries provide just over half of Casey’s labour force (51%). They are predominantly population-led industries (meaning industries reliant on population growth and consumer spending). As the population of Casey continues to grow, these jobs remain viable; however, these
industries are vulnerable to economic downturn and do not provide sustainable long term employment.

Casey’s main occupation types are:

- Technicians and Trades Workers (17.6% compared to 13.6% MSD),
- Clerical and Administrative Workers (16.3% compared to 15.9% MSD)
- Labourers (12.6% compared to 8.8% MSD)

When compared to the MSD, the City of Casey has lower levels of Managerial and Professional occupations (10.0% Managerial occupations in Casey compared to 11.7% for the MSD and 11.7% Professional occupations in Casey compared to 22.5% for the MSD).

5.5. Income

The median individual income in 2006 in Casey was $480 per week. Whilst this is higher than the median income for Australia in the same period ($466 per week) and for Victoria ($456 per week), the rate varies significantly from suburb to suburb:

- Doveton had the lowest median individual income of $319 per week; and
- Lysterfield South had the highest median individual income of $748 per week.

Median household income (all income, when all persons in the household aged over 15 years are included) was $1,097 per week in Casey in 2006.

This is again higher than median household income for Australia ($1,027 per week) and Victoria ($1,022 per week); however, the rate varies dramatically from suburb to suburb:

- Eumemmerring, the lowest median household income ($640 per week), and
- Lysterfield South, the highest median household income ($2088 per week).

Low income households (those with a combined gross income of less than $500 per week) comprise 13.7% of all households in Casey compared to 17.8% for the MSD.
Whilst the rate of low income households in Casey is lower, the distribution of low income households is unevenly spread across the municipality for example in:

- Cranbourne 20.4% of all households are low income, and
- Doveton-Eumemmerring 29.6% of all households are low income.

High income households (those households with a combined gross income of more than $1,700 per week) comprise 20.8% of all households in Casey compared to 24% for the MSD. These are also unevenly spread with higher proportions of high income households in:

- Berwick (south) (30.1%) and
- Casey Foothills (39.6%).

Moderate income households make up the vast majority of all households in Casey (65.5% compared to 58.2% in the MSD).

One fifth (22.0%) of people in Casey have some form of concessional entitlement. Age pensioners comprise 79.2% of the male population over 65 years, and female population over 63 years in Casey.

Over 6,800 people aged over 16 years of age receive a disability support pension.

Parental payments are made to 4,400 single parents in Casey. A total of 6,100 families with children are dependent on welfare or have very low incomes. One fifth (20.3% or 11,700 children) of children in Casey of up to 16 years of age live in a family who is dependent on welfare or has a very low income.

Of the 4,300 people in Casey who receive unemployment benefits, 68.4% have been receiving such benefits for more than 180 days (approximately 6 months), which is considered to be long term.

5.6. Housing Costs

In 2006 the median housing loan repayment in Casey was $1,300 per month compared to $1,252 for Victoria. In Casey, the median housing loan repayment varies from suburb to suburb from:

- $892 per month in Eumemmerring, to
- $1,716 per month in Lyndhurst in the urban areas, and
• up to $2,000 per month in Lysterfield South in the non-urban areas.

In 2006 the median rent repayment in Casey was $190 per week compared to $185 for Victoria. Rental payments varied from suburb to suburb from:
• Eumemmerring $135 per week, to
• Narre Warren South in $245 per week.

There are very few options for renting in the non-urban areas, which significantly confuses the median rent prices for these areas. For example, the median rent repayment in Lysterfield South is recorded unrealistically as $25 per week.

5.7. Health and wellbeing

The poorest people in the world usually have the poorest health outcomes. The World Health Organisation calls this the ‘social gradient of health’. This concept is used to understand the differences in health outcomes by socio-economic status of individuals within a community.

A range of factors, including education, employment and occupation, unemployment, income, race and culture, disability, social inclusion, social support, food and nutrition, local health systems, stress, addiction and crime are understood to contribute to the social gradient of health. Across Australia, Indigenous persons and the disadvantaged particularly have poorer health outcomes than other population groups.

In Casey, almost one quarter of the population reported a fair or poor health status in the Victorian Population Health Survey in 2008. Casey has higher rates than Victoria of persons:
• overweight and obese
• 18 years and over currently smoking,
• reporting a high or very high degree of psychological distress,
• reporting asthma, and
• reporting type 2 diabetes.

Figure 13: Vehicle Ownership, Casey 2006

More than half of people in Casey (51.9%) do not meet recommended levels of fruit and vegetable consumption, males, more so than females (58.9% compared to 46.5%).

One quarter of females (25.4%) and a third of males (36.3%) do not meet recommended levels of physical activity.

A total of 55,700 residents in Casey access Home Access Community Care (HACC) provided by Council. Almost 4,200 HACC clients are aged 70 years and over, comprising 30% of the population of persons aged 70 years and over.

According to the Department of Planning and Community Development Community Strength Survey in 2008, 89.5% of residents in Casey were certain they would be able to obtain support from friends or family in an emergency. The rate is lower than for across the Southern Metropolitan Region at 91.3%, and Victoria at 91.7%. 
Income and housing are intrinsically linked to health status. Personal stress levels are elevated by the inability to afford secure housing. Limited employment options within Casey mean that people often work extensive distances from home and do not have time for exercise or proper nutrition for themselves and their family.

Households experiencing financial stress often sacrifice their health first, such as private health cover, doctor and dental appointments, medication, and especially mental health care. A further sacrifice made is often quality fresh food. This is particularly concerning for children whose health can be affected in the long term by missing the opportunity to learn healthy habits from an early age.

5.8. Car ownership and travel

Car ownership is particularly high in Casey, 89.5% of all households own at least one car (compared to 82.7% for the MSD). In addition, 46.1% of motor vehicles are more than ten years old (compared to 39.8% across Victoria). Older motor vehicles are less efficient and more costly to run than newer models.

In Casey, car vehicle trips to work account for 75.7% of all trips to work compared to 65.8% for the MSD.

On weekdays, car trips account for 88.4% of all trips made compared to 10% for trips made by public transport, 0.1% made by bicycle and 1.3% made walking. On weekend days, car trips account for 96.9% of all trips compared to 1.9% of trips by public transport, 0.6% of trips by bicycle and 0.6% of trips walking.

Rooming house tenants in Casey often own an older, more costly car which is usually unregistered and uninsured to save on costs. Those without a car must rely solely on public transport to get around.
5.9. Additional needs

A growing proportion of the Casey population require assistance in their day to day lives with activities such as self-care, body movements or communication because of a disability, long-term health condition or old age.

Of the 7,000 persons who reported requiring assistance in the 2006 ABS Census, 58.7% are aged over 55 years. Those less than 40 years of age were only included as requiring assistance if their need for assistance was not due to 'old or young age'. 1:10 (10.7%) people requiring assistance were between 5 and 14 years of age. A further 17.8% of people who required assistance were between 35 and 54 years of age. The majority of people with a profound or severe disability (87.2%) live in the community, with the remaining 12.8% living in supported care. 1:5 Indigenous persons (22.9%) in Casey have a profound or severe disability.

5.10. Vulnerability to disadvantage

Parts of Casey are substantially disadvantaged and are particularly vulnerable to housing price and income fluctuations.

In the 2006 Socio-Economic Index for Areas (SEIFA) (advantage-disadvantaged combined score); Doveton and Eumemmerring were ranked in the top 10% of suburbs within both Victoria and Australia for socio-economic disadvantage.

Cranbourne and Junction Village ranked in the top 20% for Victoria and top 30% for Australia. In contrast, Narre Warren North and Lysterfield South were ranked in top 10% of suburbs within both Victoria and Australia for socio-economic advantage, with Berwick, Harkaway and Lyndhurst in the top 20% for both Victoria and Australia.
Parts of Casey are also particularly vulnerable to cost mortgage movements, high interest rates, increased expenditure, petrol and travel costs as a result of higher than average reliance on the private vehicle.

The Vulnerability Assessment for Mortgage, Petrol, Inflation Risks and Expenditure Index (VAMPIRE) measures vulnerability. In Casey, the majority of suburbs are ranked in the highest risk category on the VAMPIRE index, suggesting any rise in house prices, interest rates and petrol prices will cause significant impact for residents.

Where price fluctuations are combined with limited affordable rental accommodation and limited public transport opportunity, Casey residents find themselves particularly vulnerable to the market forces and have limited resources to absorb the impact.

![Figure 17: VAMPIRE Index, Casey & MSD, 2006](image_url)
Casey’s main employment industries: Construction; Manufacturing; and Retail Trade are particularly vulnerable to economic downturn. The Centre of Full Equity and Employment’s Employment Vulnerability Index (EVI) indicates the greatest vulnerability in employment around Dandenong South, Cranbourne West and Hallam areas. A large majority of Casey’s vulnerable industries operate from vulnerable employment areas, which in turn employ of almost half Casey’s labour force.

As Casey’s main industries are population-led, they are usually the first impacted by economic down-turn when consumers reduce spending. A major financial crisis can lead to job losses and reduced incomes for Casey’s workers.

Casey’s main occupations are not highly skilled, increasing employment vulnerability of residents and pressure to seek alternative, more secure employment. Employment vulnerability and impeding downturn impacts a person’s ability to secure and maintain payments for housing.

5.11. Crime
Declining housing affordability has flow-on impact on crime. Financially stressed families often have higher levels of personal stress as well, which can lead to aggravated or abusive behaviour, as well as addiction. People who are looking for ways to obtain more money may resort to illegal means such as burglaries and thefts.

Figure 18: Employment Vulnerability Index (EVI), 2009
Casey has the fourth-highest rate of police callouts for family violence incidents of all Victorian Local Government Areas, with approximately 2,700 incidents reported in 2010/11 and 770 reported offences of family violence. Reported offences relating to family violence in Casey has increased by 10% since the previous year.

Between the 2009/10 and 2010/11 financial years there was an 11.6% increase in assaults, a 7.2% increase in thefts from shops and a 49.4% increase in drug related offences for possession or use. In the same timeframe there was a 4.3% decrease in property damage, a 3.2% decrease in thefts from a motor vehicle and a 2.5% decrease in robberies.

6. Housing trends
6.1. Dwelling types

There are currently 85,000 dwellings in Casey. The number of dwellings is expected to increase to 115,000 by 2036.

The majority (87.2%) of Casey’s housing stock is separate houses, compared to 66.1% for the MSD.

Despite the growing proportion of semi-detached homes and townhouses these comprise less than 10% of overall housing stock (compared to almost 20% for the MSD).

Higher density apartment blocks over three storeys make up less than 1% of all housing stock in Casey (compared to 5.7% for the MSD).

Casey’s housing stock is particularly homogeneous in both dwelling type and in the number of bedrooms per dwelling.

Less than 5% of homes in Casey have only one or two bedrooms. Most single bedroom homes are classed as ‘other’ dwelling types (dwellings other than bedsits, separate homes, semi-detached homes, townhouses, units, flats and apartments) and most two bedroom homes are semi-detached homes, townhouses or apartments. More than half of the semi-detached homes and townhouses and one third of apartments in Casey have three or more bedrooms.
6.2. Housing tenure

A higher proportion of Casey homes are being purchased (52.5%) and a lower portion are 23.5% are fully owned compared to the MSD (47.7% and 30.8%).

Renters comprise a smaller proportion of households: 17.5% in Casey compared to 24.5% for the MSD.

Within the total rental households in Casey, 86%, or 15%, of total households are rented privately, primarily from investors. Only 11.9% of the population and 2.1% of total households live in accommodation rented from the State Government (public housing). Anecdotal evidence suggests that in most parts of Casey, vacancy rates for private rental accommodation is less than 1% of the total stock. Most of the time, new tenants are ready to move into a property as soon as previous tenants leave.

In 2010, there were 714 new private rental lettings in Casey. Compared to the previous year, lettings for private rental were:

- single bedroom flats - down from 11 to 0
- two bedroom flats - down by 12.3% to 100 lettings
- 2 bedroom houses - down by 27.8% to 12 lettings, and
- 3 bedroom houses - up by 5.6% to 603 new lettings

Of the 2,130 Office of Housing (public housing) lettings in Casey, 57.1% are separate homes and 26.6% are semi-detached homes and townhouses. There are no public or community provided rooming houses in Casey. There are two listed Support Residential Service facilities in Casey, located in Berwick and Cranbourne comprising 27 and 39 beds respectively.

Rooming houses are categorised as 'non private dwellings' and identified as 'other' tenure type in ABS Census data.
It is likely that many people who live in rooming houses either did not fully complete the Census, and where they did they completed a shorter form, reducing the richness of available data.

### 6.3. Homelessness

The 2006 *Counting the Homeless* survey is conducted at the same time as the ABS Census to determine the rate of homelessness on the Census night. In the 2006 report there were three definitions of homelessness, including:

- **Primary homelessness**, which describes a situation where a person is without conventional accommodation, such as living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or living in improvised dwellings such as sheds, garages, cabins, cars or railway carriages.

- **Secondary homelessness**, which describes a situation where a person frequently moves from one form of temporary shelter to another, including people staying in emergency or transitional accommodation provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP – now known as Homelessness Support Program). This category also includes people residing temporarily with others because they have no accommodation of their own and people staying in a rooming house on a short-term basis (less than 12 weeks).

- **Tertiary homelessness**, which describes a situation where a person is living in a rooming house on a medium to long-term basis (more than 12 weeks). Medium to long-term residence in a private rooming house is defined as homelessness because the characteristics of accommodation are less than the minimum community standard outlined by Chamberlain and MacKenzie (1992).

Due to the transitional nature of homelessness, *Counting the Homeless survey* represents a snapshot of homelessness on only one night.
On the Census night in 2006, 713 people were reported homeless across Casey and Cardinia and a further 81 marginal caravan park residents were also counted. Of the 713 persons:

- 117 people (16.4%) were living in improvised dwellings (primary homelessness).
- 395 people (55.4%) were living with friends (colloquially known as ‘couch surfing’) and 177 people (24.8%) were staying in accommodation provided under the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP) or Transitional Housing Management (THM) Program (secondary homelessness).
- 24 people (3.4%) were living in a rooming house (either secondary or tertiary homelessness depending on length of stay).

### 6.4. Rooming houses

At 30 June 2011, there were 22 registered rooming houses providing 168 beds across Casey.

However, rooming houses are not evenly spread across the municipality. Of a total 22 registered rooming houses:

- Nine of the are located in Berwick
- Four are located Narre Warren and Narre Warren South.
- Only two rooming houses are registered in the southern part of the municipality in Cranbourne.

Only one rooming house in Casey is located within an 800 metre walking distance of high frequency public transport (bus or train), shops, open space, community facilities and support services.

Half are considered to be reasonably well-located (at least 3 of the above infrastructure and services types) to enable tenants to have adequate access to regular access to facilities, infrastructure and services.

Greater Cranbourne (particularly Cranbourne and Cranbourne North), as well as parts of Doveton-Eumemmerring, Hallam and Narre Warren, are considered to have high demand for affordable rental accommodation, rooming houses and other cheaper forms of accommodation. This assessment is based on high ratios of low income households and high levels of households in rental stress, compared to low supplies of registered rooming houses and other similar forms of accommodation in the area.

Typically Casey’s registered rooming houses are privately owned, converted from suburban homes, and house between four and ten residents. The majority of rooming houses provide communal facilities for tenants.

Rooming houses in Casey operate in different ways, varying dependent on the tenant profile. Some rooming houses are geared to provide emergency housing for
highly vulnerable and disadvantaged people (single males, singles generally, or anyone). Others have stringent screening processes to ensure that prospective tenants will suit the rooming house lifestyle and will mix well with existing tenants. Some rooming house managers are disinclined to house families with young children in consideration of the high risk to safety.

6.5. Affordability

House prices in Casey have more than doubled in the past 25 years and are $100,000 more than ten years ago. In 2011 the median house price in Casey was $375,000.

In 2011, a household would require a gross annual income of around $98,000 to be able to comfortably afford to purchase a moderately priced home in Casey, however, only 30% of households in Casey earn over $98,000.

In the 2006 Census, 5,300 (13.4%) households in Casey who were purchasing their homes were paying more than 30% of the household income on the mortgage (mortgage stress).

Narre Warren South, Lynbrook, Lyndhurst and Berwick South (all fairly new suburbs) have the highest rates of mortgage stress. Over time, households in these areas will become more affluent and rates of mortgage stress will decrease. Emerging suburbs such as Cranbourne East, Clyde and Clyde North are projected to have the highest rates of mortgage stress in the future as new households establish and young families take on new mortgages. It is expected that approximately 9,200 households, or 8% of total households, will be in mortgage stress in Casey by 2031.

In 2010, the median rent price in Casey for a new private letting in a three bedroom home was $310 per week. The median rent price for a two bedroom flat was $260 per week for a new private letting and $10 more per week for a two bedroom house. In order to comfortably afford to rent a home in Casey, a household would need to earn between $800 - $1,000 per week.

In the 2006 Census, 3,400 (26.9%) rental households in Casey were paying more than 30% of the household income on rent (rental stress). According to the above median rent prices for new private lettings, low income households could expect to spend at least 50% of their income on rent in Casey. Doveton, Eumemmerring, Cranbourne and Cranbourne North have the highest levels of rental stress across Casey. These suburbs also have higher rates of socio-economic disadvantage. Unlike mortgage stress, the rates of households in rental stress will remain constant over time, particularly in areas of high disadvantage.

One person for every 1.08 private rental households in Casey receives rental assistance from Centrelink. This equates to assistance provided to approximately 8,890
people, and 71% of renters accessing assistance to pay for weekly rental costs.

7. Consultation

7.1. Objectives of consultation

Consultation for the Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper was expanded to consider not only rooming houses, but other accommodation options that people could utilise if they could not access or afford private rental housing in Casey.

There were five key objectives for consultation:

- Understand the objectives of the Casey community in relation to housing diversity, choice and affordability;
- Identify the needs of people in the Casey community who are living in rooming houses or other shared housing types, who are homeless or who are at risk of being forced into shared housing or homelessness;
- Increase awareness of the issues around shared housing, affordability and homelessness in Casey;
- Inform the community of Council’s responsibility to register and inspect shared housing facilities operating in Casey, which assists in mitigating some of the negative impacts (real and perceived) of such facilities; and
- Demystify the characteristics of people in Casey who are living in shared housing or are homeless.
In order to achieve these objectives, a wide range of stakeholders were consulted, including Casey residents, residents who have or are currently living in rooming houses and other shared housing types, local housing and support service providers, private rooming house operators in Casey, community housing providers, State and Local Government Departments, and peak bodies representing tenants and operators.

Consultation involved a number of processes to inform a policy on rooming houses. Some processes are ongoing, to continue as the policy is developed. The consultation processes are outlined in the following sections of this chapter.

7.2. Ongoing Consultation

7.2.1. Interviews with rooming house or shared housing tenants

In preparing this Key Issues Paper, a substantial effort has been made to consult with former and current rooming house and shared housing tenants and those who have or are currently experiencing homelessness.

Tenants were targeted through support service agencies that had participated in stakeholder workshops. Tenants were asked to participate in an interview with Council’s Social Planning consultant. The purpose of the interviews was to understand the needs of rooming house tenants in Casey; to also tell their story of housing insecurity to the broader Casey community; and to demystify the characteristics of people in Casey who require affordable alternative accommodation.
So far only one person has undertaken an interview. Lee Madison’s (real name withheld) story about insecure housing from an early age was published in the first edition of the Casey Housing Policy Update in December 2011. Council will continue to promote participation in the interviews to involve former and current rooming house and shared housing tenants in the development of a policy on rooming houses.

### 7.2.2. Casey Conversations online forum

The Casey Conversations online forum was launched on 2 December 2011 to provide an opportunity for the community to voice community desires and expectations for housing in Casey.

New topics/questions will be generated periodically and relate to the stage of policy development on rooming houses.

The first question was how has the 2011 Casey Housing Diversity Statement contributed to providing a greater range of housing types in new developments? The question has attracted five external responses so far that have related to diversity of lot sizes, increasing the availability of housing that is access for people with limited or impaired mobility and the delivery of infrastructure and services.

The second question, launched on 23 February 2012, was if you earned $500 or less per week, what type(s) of accommodation would you like to be able to access in Casey? What do you need to consider when choosing where to live? No responses have been received to date.

### 7.2.3. Housing webpage on Council’s website

On 3 October 2011, Council launched a housing webpage on Council’s website to provide a source of information relating to current and future housing policy development.

The housing webpage provides up-to-date information on the progress of policy development and links to the Housing Diversity Survey and Casey Conversations. At 2 March 2012, the housing webpage had been visited by 1,748 people, with 404 visits in the previous 30 days.

### 7.2.4. Casey’s Housing Policy Community Update

A double sided brochure called ‘Casey’s Housing Policy Community Update’ is being released as new policy development milestones are achieved.

The Community Update discusses the outcomes of achieved milestones; promotes the need to provide a diverse range of housing types including affordable housing and alternative housing options such as rooming houses, crisis/emergency housing and other shared housing types; and advertises how the community can have their say.

The first edition of the Community Update, released in November 2011, discussed the proposed structure for a policy on rooming houses, discussed the review of the Housing Diversity Statement, advertised the consultation options and told the story of a resident in Casey who had experienced periodic housing insecurity for much of her life.

The second edition of the Community Update, released in February 2012, discussed the focus for the Rooming House Policy and key points on completed consultation. The third edition of the Community Update will be released in April 2012.

### 7.2.5. Mailing list

Consultation participants who have elected to be included on a mailing list are provided with regular updates on the progress of the policy development and will be asked to provide ongoing feedback as new milestones are completed. There are currently 31 people/organisations on the mailing list.

### 7.3. Completed Consultation

#### 7.3.1. Housing Diversity Survey

A Housing Diversity Survey was prepared to understand the community’s preferences for housing types in the municipality.
The Survey was launched on 28 October 2011 and closed on 29 February 2012. An electronic version of the survey can be completed online, which has been advertised through newspapers, Council’s quarterly magazine City News and on Council’s website.

A hard copy survey was also prepared and distributed at stakeholder workshops for participants to pass on to Casey residents. Council has advertised the ability to complete the survey in another language or format (e.g. large print).

The results from the survey will inform a review of the Casey Housing Diversity Statement 2011, which will coincide with the completion of a policy on rooming houses.

There are 97 responses to the survey to date, representing residents from: Berwick; Cannons Creek; Cranbourne; Cranbourne East; Cranbourne North; Cranbourne West; Doveton; Endeavour Hills; Eumemmerring; Hallam; Hampton Park; Lynbrook; Lyndhurst; Narre Warren; Narre Warren North; Narre Warren South; Pearcedale and Warneet.

The majority of respondents live in detached dwellings (75.3%) and 6 respondents live in a rooming house (6.2%). Just over half of respondents are female. On third of respondents are aged between 26-40 years (36.5%). A further 59.4% were aged over 40 years.

The employment status of respondents was varied, with just under half (49.5%) working full time, 12.7% working in part time or casual employment, 13.7% unemployed and 20.0% neither working nor looking for work.

In identifying the five most important aspects of housing choice for respondents, the most popular results included:

- Whether your home is located near shops, schools, transport – 57 responses
- How much your home costs (mortgage or rent) – 56 responses
- The reputation of the suburb/neighbourhood – 52 responses
- How much it costs to live in your home (utility bills, costs of transport, etc) – 46 responses
- Whether there is a garden in your home and the form of the home (e.g. detached, townhouse, apartment) – 36 responses each

Nineteen respondents have experienced a situation in which they could not afford to pay for their housing. Poor credit/rental history and the lack of a regular income source were cited as the top reasons affecting respondents’ ability to access housing, along with disability and injury or illness.

Two-thirds of respondents (59.5%) believe there needs to be more options for rental housing in Casey. 53.6% believe that there is not enough affordable housing in Casey. When asked which types of affordable housing are suitable in Casey, the most popular results included:

- Public housing – 48 responses
- Crisis, short term housing (for emergency accommodation) – 32 responses
- Social housing (provided for rent by Not-For-Profit organisations to eligible people) – 31 responses
- Government-supported shared housing (e.g. Supported Residential Services, housing and rooming houses that are operated by Not-For-Profit organisations, etc) – 25 responses
- Private shared housing (e.g. student housing, hotels/motels, hostels, rooming houses, etc) – 24 responses

In addition, some respondents commented that affordable housing options should be properly managed, provide a balance in accommodation needs and should include services that can cope with demand.
7.3.2. Professional stakeholder workshops

Twelve stakeholder workshop sessions were undertaken in October and November to consult with:

- Council’s Building, Planning and Environmental Health enforcement officers;
- Council’s, Community Safety, Community Services, Health Promotion, Local Laws and Planning officers;
- The Department of Planning and Community Development;
- The Department of Human Services;
- Consumer Affairs Victoria;
- Private rooming house operators;
- Community housing providers;
- Housing, legal and support agencies;
- Victoria Police, Country Fire Authority and Neighbourhood Watch;
- Real Estate Agents; and
- The Registered Accommodation Association of Victoria.

Consultation focused around five key themes:

- demography (who is living in rooming houses and what their needs are),
- supply (what’s available),
- gaps and issues,
- how to respond (possible directions) and
- policy development (what should go into the policy).

The feedback from the stakeholder workshops is summarised below.

Demography

A wide range of people live in rooming houses and other forms of shared housing, including vulnerable people, students, singles (particularly older men and women who have experienced relationship breakdown), single and dual parent families with young children, employed and unemployed, people with mental health issues, people with dependency issues, recent arrivals and people who have recently been released from prison.

Many participants agreed that rooming houses were not necessarily the most appropriate form of housing for these groups.
Housing With Respect – Rooming Houses Key Issues Paper

There are no community-operated rooming houses in Casey. Operators of private rooming houses in Casey are typically private investors who sometimes own or operate more than one rooming house. There are varied operation models for rooming houses, where some specifically target particular groups (such as those seeking emergency accommodation) and some specifically exclude particular groups (such as children for safety reasons).

Operators of private rooming houses in Casey believe that the recent changes to legislation limit their ability to establish new rooming houses in converted residential homes (due to financial implications associated with meeting the requirements of registration).

**Supply**

There is no common best practice model for operating private rooming houses. Some rooming houses in Casey have part time managers. Some managers and operators screen prospective tenants to reduce intra-tenant conflict and ensure that a new tenant fits in.

Conflicts in rooming houses commonly relate to the sharing of facilities in communal areas. The likelihood of conflicts occurring is higher when the tenant mix is not suitable, or if there is a dominant tenant/group of tenants who claim ownership of common areas. Whilst self contained accommodation can alleviate potential conflicts it is not considered the most profitable option within the private rooming house industry.

Some tenants have lease agreements with the rooming house manager/operator. When they do, rights and responsibilities of both the tenant and the manager/operator fall under the main part of the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, changing requirements for bond, timeframes for notices and obligations relating to breaking a lease. Lease agreements can be to both the benefit and detriment of tenants.

**Gaps and issues**

Whilst the definition of a rooming house in the *Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008* is aligned to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997*, there is no definition of a rooming house in the *Planning and Environment Act 1987*.

The most similar term used in the Victoria Planning Provisions for a rooming house is ‘boarding house’ which is also not defined. There are no objectives guiding Council in the Victoria Planning Provisions for making planning decisions about rooming houses.

There is concern that proposed changes to the *Residential Tenancies Act 1997* to regulate additional building and amenity standards would be best assessed by Municipal Building Surveyors, who are not authorised persons under that Act.

As regulations for rooming houses are spread across four separate Acts of Parliament, tenants, operators and managers are confused over what is required.

Council has powers of enforcement under three of the four Acts through three individual Departments. Operators and managers are confused about who in Council is responsible for each section. These issues have been identified as gaps in the regulatory framework.

Whilst various pieces of legislation have been amended over the past few years there remain loopholes that some particularly unscrupulous rooming house operators can use to avoid registration.

Furthermore, it is often difficult to identify a rooming house, as most are identified to Council through complaints about consistent car parking or noise issues.
Housing referral and support agencies also have difficulty in identifying whether or not a known rooming house is registered. Council is required by law to maintain a public record of all registered rooming houses. However, few external groups are aware of how to access this record.

These issues have been identified as gaps in the legislative structure that provides for rooming houses registration and compliance.

There are a number of issues associated with a lack of knowledge of the rights and responsibilities of both tenants and operators.

Tenants really only become aware of their rights when they experience a situation that leads them to seek advice and support (reactive), rather than proactively learning what their rights are.

There are some circumstances where tenants will choose not to act in an unjust situation for fear of eviction or other consequences.

Feedback suggested that a small proportion of tenants are aware of how to use their rights and the system to their advantage by creating a reason to be evicted to receive further funding, thus saving their own income.

Feedback from consultation suggested that some operators are not aware of the regulatory requirements for rooming houses and that others are aware of the requirements but choose not to meet such requirements to increase their profitability.

There are issues with language barriers for both tenants and operators in accessing information on rights and responsibilities. Whilst written material is available from Consumer Affairs Victoria in a number of languages, there is a recognition that some people are illiterate in their own language and so audio material is also being prepared.

There are issues associated with a lack of information sharing across stakeholders. Council, housing referral and support agencies, State Government Departments, operators and other stakeholders are required to cooperate closely for the current system to work. When this doesn’t occur it is to the detriment of the quality of life of tenants.

There is a fear in the broader community that people who live in rooming houses are dangerous and undesirable. Fears often relate to the background of rooming house tenants, the safety of the neighbourhood and the value of property in the neighbourhood. These issues have been identified as knowledge gaps across the broader community.

Private rooming houses are not affordable to low income earners or those completely reliant on supported incomes such as a pension.

There are a number of costs involved in establishing a new rooming house. Recent changes to the Building Regulations promoting accessibility have limited the option of conversion of an existing residential home to a rooming house.

Community housing providers struggle to meet demand. Commitment to new projects requires substantial financial assistance. These issues have been identified as financial gaps preventing an increase in the supply of affordable rooming house accommodation in Casey.

**How to respond & policy development**

There was a general recognition that rooming houses, particularly private rooming houses, will need to exist into the
future to provide accommodation options for those outside of the mainstream private housing market.

There was also recognition that, whilst rooming houses will exist, they are not necessarily the most appropriate form of accommodation for all current user groups. It was suggested that other types of housing, such as more private rental housing, social housing, affordable housing and public housing and caravan parks (to a lesser extent) should be made available to provide suitable options for vulnerable groups.

Feedback suggested that Council’s priorities for rooming houses should be:
- well-located, near trains and high frequency bus services,
- located near shops, support services and Centrelink;
- affordable;
- safe, secure and clean;
- registered and compliant;
- provide dignified and respectful living for tenants; and
- be spread across the municipality to avoid concentrated pockets.

If Council were to support the establishment of new rooming houses in Casey, feedback suggested that although small rooming houses would be acceptable, that proposals for larger rooming houses should not be endorsed, or if they were run only by the not-for-profit or the Government sector.

Unregistered rooming houses should not be acceptable. Rooming houses should have sound management practices.

In addressing some of the identified issues for tenants, feedback suggested that Council should investigate ways to ensure that rooming house accommodation is affordable for tenants; to regulate (and perhaps incentivise) requirements for improved cleanliness, safety and food security within rooming houses, and improve information-sharing for tenants.

Council will need to determine in principle whether it will accept that children should live in rooming houses. Whilst it is not ideal, the alternative may be homelessness. Council should consider how to improve the safety for children, potentially through requiring registration as a family only rooming house or requiring safety checks or working with children checks for operators.

Feedback suggested that it is often the operators of unregistered rooming houses who give a bad name to the industry. It was suggested that Council should support reputable operators of registered and compliant rooming houses at the expense of rogue operators. Council could provide operators with resources to develop better management practices and encourage on-site managers in larger rooming houses.

Council could investigate ways to support the housing industry to increase the supply of affordable housing and rooming houses, potentially through advocacy, incentives and/or facilitating partnerships.

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Council could investigate ways to support the housing industry to increase the supply of affordable housing and rooming houses, potentially through advocacy, incentives and/or facilitating partnerships.
Council could improve its own processes by coordinating registration, inspections and enforcement. Council’s enforcement officers already coordinate responses to non-compliant rooming houses, this could be formalised by preparing a consistent procedural timeline for when enforcement action is elevated.

Council could develop a procedure to close a rooming house by firstly identifying and informing external groups who can provide assistance and support to tenants to find alternative accommodation.

Council could improve its relationships with a range of stakeholders relating to rooming houses, including the State Government, rooming house operators and housing referral and support agencies. Council should also educate the community by allaying some of the fears relating to rooming houses and rooming house tenants.

In addressing structural gaps, Council could liaise with housing referral agencies to properly identify registered rooming houses and seek out unregistered rooming houses.

Council could develop a checklist outlining the requirements for permitted exemptions for registration and/or planning permit for rooming houses and other accommodation to address issues where operators attempt to avoid the regulatory process.

Council could investigate the potential to provide assistance to operators to reduce running costs of a rooming house where savings can be passed on to tenants, such as discounting rents.

8. Summary of key issues

The key issues identified in consultation that will inform a policy on rooming houses are summarised below:

- Living in a rooming house is not affordable, particularly for those who are completely reliant on supported incomes, such as pensions.
- People in rooming houses need easy access to public transport, affordable food, affordable health care, Centrelink and support services.
- People living in rooming houses often fear for their health and safety and fear being evicted, particularly if there is no alternative.
- Secure storage of food is an issue in rooming houses.
- The residential status of refugees and asylum seekers often prevents them from accessing private rental housing because they cannot access employment or supported incomes.
- Recent and proposed changes to legislation prohibit an operator’s ability to establish a new rooming house in an existing residential dwelling. It will mean that new rooming houses will mostly likely have to be purpose-built. The legislative changes could also increase the number of unregistered rooming houses across Casey to avoid building requirements. It is noted that Council supports the proposed changes to equitably provide accommodation for everyone in Casey (including people with special needs) and that the challenge lies in adequately supplying accommodation for Casey residents.
- There are varied models of operation for private rooming houses, with no best model.
- Conflicts occur in rooming houses, particularly in communal areas of rooming houses. The likelihood of conflict is increased by unsuitable tenant mixes and when one member or group has ownership over communal areas or facilities in the rooming house.
- There are varied tenancy arrangements between separate tenants and operators. Tenants may have lease agreements, meaning they fall under the main part of the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. Some tenants are also told they are being housed in
crisis/emergency accommodation thereby reducing their tenancy rights.

- Whilst the definition of a rooming house in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 has been aligned to the definition in the Residential Tenancies Act 1997, there is no definition for a rooming house in the Planning and Environment Act 1987 or the Victoria Planning Provisions. There are also no objectives guiding the design, location and size of rooming houses in the Victoria Planning Provisions to guide Council decision-making for rooming house proposals.

- Additional building and amenity standards are proposed within the Residential Tenancies Act 1997. These standards could be assessed by Council’s Municipal Building Surveyor; however, Council does not have the authority to enforce the Residential Tenancies Act 1997.

- There is often confusion from tenants, operators and managers of rooming houses over what is required under various pieces of legislation relating to rooming houses, and who in Council is responsible for each section.

- Whilst legislation has been amended to make it more difficult for operators to escape registration, loopholes still exist to avoid registration.

- It is often difficult to identify a rooming house, and for housing referral and support agencies to identify whether a known rooming house is registered or unregistered. Whilst Council is required to maintain a public record of all registered rooming houses, information sharing between Council and agencies could be improved.

- Tenants often only seek information about their rights and responsibilities reactively. Attempts to proactively provide information for tenants is not often utilised.

- Both operators and tenants with language barriers often face difficulty understanding their rights and responsibilities. Written material is often not useful if people are illiterate in their own language. Consumer Affairs Victoria is preparing audio material in a number of languages. Knowledge that these resources are available remains an issue.

- Information sharing across Council, housing referral and support agencies, State Government, operators and other stakeholders is lacking and this is often to the detriment of the quality of living for tenants.

- Fears from the broader community often relate to the background of rooming house tenants, the safety of the neighbourhood and the value of property in the neighbourhood.

- Community housing providers are struggling to commit to new projects without substantial financial assistance.

9. Next steps

Following the preparation of the Key Issues Paper, Council will begin preparing the Policy Directions Paper, taking feedback from consultation into consideration. The Policy Directions Paper will be prepared in consultation with the Rooming House Policy Steering Group.

It is expected that the Policy Directions Paper for the rooming houses policy will be complete in March 2012. Further input into the Policy Directions Paper will be available informally to the community via the Casey Conversations online blog.

Photo 12: Osborne House, Fitzroy, Self Contained Publicly Owned Rooming House

The remaining components of the rooming houses policy – an Implementation Strategy
and a Local Planning Policy – will be prepared in the first half of 2012, with the final suite of documents expected to be complete in June 2012. Public exhibition of the rooming houses policy will follow in the second half of 2012.

Alongside the preparation of a policy on rooming houses, Council will also be reviewing the Casey Housing Diversity Statement to include objectives on improving the quality and supply of housing options for those who cannot afford or access mainstream private housing. The reviewed Housing Diversity Statement will be completed in June 2012 to coincide with the completion of a policy on rooming houses.

In the long-term, Council will be reviewing the Casey Housing Strategy 2005 (commencing in the 2012-13 financial year) and the Housing Diversity Statement will be superseded by the reviewed Housing Strategy.

Photo 13: Chelmsford and Pyrmont, St Kilda, Two Community Rooming Houses with a Mix of Shared and Self-Contained Accommodation
### 10. Glossary of Terms

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<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
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<tr>
<td>Affordable Housing</td>
<td>Housing available to low income households (the bottom 40% of the income distribution) at less than 30% of the household income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrears</td>
<td>The situation in which an individual/household has not made due payments (e.g. Mortgage Arrears, Rent Arrears).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boarding House</td>
<td>See Rooming House.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caravan Park</td>
<td>Land used to allow accommodation in caravans, cabins, tents or the like. Residential caravan parks typically fully or partly house tenants as the primary form of accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Couch Surfing</td>
<td>A colloquial term to define a secondary form of homelessness in which an individual is staying temporarily with friends or family and does not have a permanent residential address. Couch surfing can also be transitory and involve the residences of multiple friends or family members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis/Emergency Accommodation</td>
<td>Temporary accommodation provided on a not-for-profit basis by an agency which receives homelessness support funding from the State Government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment Vulnerability Index (EVI)</td>
<td>An assessment of the vulnerability of industries to economic downturn which could result in loss of jobs, loss of income or both.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Stress</td>
<td>The situation in which households who pay a high proportion of the household income on housing costs, including mortgage/rent, utility bills. Other household costs such as transport, education, healthcare and groceries also contribute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitable Room</td>
<td>A room of a dwelling or residential building other than a bathroom, laundry, toilet, pantry, walk-in robe, corridor, stair, lobby, photographic darkroom, clothes drying and other space of a specialised nature occupied neither frequently nor for extended periods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home and Community Care (HACC)</td>
<td>Services, provided primarily by Council, that are available for frail aged, people with a disability and their carers which aim to work with and support a person’s independence and assist them to live at home and to participate in everyday activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness</td>
<td>A situation in which an individual does not have access to ongoing and secure accommodation. Primary homelessness describes a situation where a person is without conventional accommodation, such as living on the streets, sleeping in parks, squatting in derelict buildings or living in improvised dwellings such as sheds, garages, cabins, cars or railway carriages. Secondary homelessness describes a situation where a persons frequently moves from one form of temporary shelter to another, including people staying in a rooming house for less than twelve weeks. Tertiary homelessness describes a situation where a person is living in a rooming house for more than twelve weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homelessness Support Program</td>
<td>Formerly known as the Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP), the Homelessness Support Program is a Commonwealth and State Government partnered fund to assist people to access housing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hostel</td>
<td>A house, building or structure which is used primarily for the accommodation of travellers.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>House Repossession</td>
<td>An order given by the Sherriff’s Office in a situation where a homeowner has continually not paid mortgage costs and has not taken prior steps leading to the repossession of the house to cover costs. On the allocated day, the Sherriff’s Office will order the homeowner and other individuals residing at the house to vacate the premises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Affordability</td>
<td>Housing that is generally available to all households at less than 30% of the household income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Diversity</td>
<td>The range of housing available to a local community by housing type, form, functionality and tenure.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Housing Establishment Fund (HEF)</td>
<td>A grant program funded by the State Government and provided by homelessness housing and support agencies to assist eligible clients to access and/or to maintain private rental housing, or to access emergency short term accommodation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Stress</td>
<td>A situation in which a household is paying more than 30% of the household income on housing costs. Also defined as mortgage stress and rental stress.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improvised Dwelling</td>
<td>A building or structure such as a shed, garage, cabin, car or railway carriage, that is used either temporarily or permanently as a dwelling.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low Income Household</td>
<td>A household with a combined gross income of less than $500 per week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Individual Income</td>
<td>The income level of people aged 15 years and over, where the identified group is divided into two units so that one half of individuals have incomes above the median individual income and one half have incomes below the median individual income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median House Price</td>
<td>The sale price value of homes sold within the given timeframe, where houses sold are divided into two units so that one half of houses were sold for more than the median house price and one half of houses were sold for less than the median house price.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Household Income</td>
<td>The income level of households, where the income level represents the sum of the individual incomes of each person aged over 15 years present in the household, and where the identified group is divided into two units so that one half of households have incomes above the median household income and one half of households have incomes below the median household income.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Housing Loan Repayment</td>
<td>The housing loan repayment level of households, where households paying a housing loan are divided into two units so that one half of housing loan repayments are more than the median housing loan repayment and one half of housing loan repayments are less than the median housing loan repayment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median Rent Repayment</td>
<td>The rent repayment level of households, where households paying rent are divided into two units so that one half of rent repayments are more than the median rent repayment and one half of rent repayments are less than the median rent repayment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Melbourne Statistical Division (MSD)</td>
<td>A geography typically used when comparing population data that represents Metropolitan Melbourne.</td>
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Metropolitan Melbourne

A geography which encompasses the 31 metropolitan municipalities in Victoria including Banyule, Bayside, Boroondara, Brimbank, Cardinia, Casey, Darebin, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Hobsons Bay, Hume, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maribyrnong, Maroondah, Melbourne, Melton, Monash, Moonee Valley, Moreland, Mornington Peninsula, Nillumbik, Port Phillip, Stonnington, Whitehorse, Whittlesea, Wyndham, Yarra and Yarra Ranges.

Mortgage Stress

A situation in which a household is paying more than 30% of the household income on the mortgage. Rates of mortgage stress are usually compared to other households paying a mortgage.

Nation Building – Economic Stimulus Plan

A Plan established by the Commonwealth Government in response to the global financial crisis which, in part, aims to fund the development of affordable housing through the Not-For-Profit sector to eligible recipients.

National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)

A scheme established by the Commonwealth Government to address the shortage of affordable rental housing by offering financial incentives to the business sector and community organisations to build and rent dwellings to low and moderate income households at a rate that is at least 20% below prevailing market rates.

Prescribed Accommodation

A term used in the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008 to describe the forms of accommodation covered by the Act and that require registration with Council. Under the Act, prescribed accommodation means any premises used as a place of abode, whether temporary or permanent, fixed or mobile, where a person or persons can be accommodated on payment of consideration.

Public Housing

Housing that is funded by the Government and is available to eligible recipients.

Rental Stress

A situation in which a household is paying more than 30% of the household income on rent. Rates of rental stress are usually compared to other households paying rent, often those in private rental housing.

Rooming House

A building in which there is one or more rooms available for occupancy on payment of rent in which the total number of people who may occupy that room or those rooms is not less than four. Common characteristics of rooming houses include:

- Primarily single room accommodation.
- Shared access to common facilities such as bathrooms, kitchens, laundries and living areas.
- No formal supports are present on the premises.
- The owner and their family generally do not live on the premises.
- Increasingly used by long-term homeless people or those in housing crisis.

Shared Housing

Generally defined by the City of Casey to include housing where some amenities are shared between unrelated tenants, such as rooming houses, emergency/crisis housing, student housing and hostels.

Shared housing in the Casey Planning Scheme is defined as a building, including outbuildings normal to a dwelling, to house a person, people and any dependants or two or more people (including people with intellectual disabilities), where the total number of habitable rooms does not exceed ten.

Social Housing

Housing that is owned and managed by housing associations or providers and is in part funded by Government means and directed towards eligible recipients.
Socio-Economic Index For Areas (SEIFA)  
Also known as SEIFA, the index is a measure of socio-economic advantage/disadvantage of a given area which draws on a number of variables, including education levels, employment status, main occupation types, income levels, housing stress and disengagement of youths.

Southern Metropolitan Region  
A geography defined primarily by the State Government which includes eight principal municipalities including Bayside, Cardinia, Casey, Frankston, Glen Eira, Greater Dandenong, Kingston and Mornington Peninsula; and two additional municipalities also represented in the Inner Metropolitan Region which are Port Phillip and Stonnington.

Student Housing  
Housing specifically provided for students. Student housing that is associated with a recognised education institution is exempt from registration as prescribed accommodation under the Public Health and Wellbeing Act 2008.

Supported Accommodation Assistance Program (SAAP)  
See Homelessness Support Program.

Supported Residential Service (SRS)  
Premises where accommodation and special or personal care are provided or offered for persons (other than members of the family of the proprietor of the premises) for fee or reward.

Transitional Housing Management (THM)  
A program funded by the National Affordable Housing Agreement and managed by 15 THM Program-funded organisations that provides accommodation for up to 12 months (18 months for young people) to people who are homeless or at risk of homelessness.

Vacancy Rate  
A measure to assess the availability of rental properties in an area. Low vacancy rates suggest strong rental sales due to pressure from demand.

Vulnerability Assessment for Mortgage, Petrol, Inflation Rates and Expenditure (VAMPIRE)  
A measure to determine the vulnerability of an area to costs associated with every day life, including housing costs, transport costs, expenditure, etc.
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Customer Service Centres

Cranbourne
Centro Cranbourne

Narre Warren
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Narre Warren South
Amberly Park
Shopping Centre

Telephone: 9705 5200
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