City of DAREBIN

the place to live

Darebin Housing Strategy

PART 1: Growth & Need and
PART 2: Character & Design

August 2025

Acknowledgement of country

Darebin City Council acknowledges the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people as the Traditional Owners and custodians of the land and waters we now call Darebin and affirms that Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people have lived on this land for millennia, practising their customs and ceremonies of celebration, initiation and renewal. Council acknowledges that Elders past, present and emerging are central to the cohesion, intergenerational wellbeing and ongoing self-determination of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities. They have played and continue to play a pivotal role in maintaining and transmitting culture, history and language.

Council respects and recognises Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities' values, living culture and practices, including their continuing spiritual connection to the land and waters and their right to self-determination. Council also recognises the diversity within Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and communities have had and continue to play a unique role in the life of the Darebin municipality. Council recognises and values this ongoing contribution and its significant value for our city and Australian society more broadly.

(Extract from Darebin City Council's Statement of commitment to Traditional Owners and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people 2019)

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1.0 Introduction

Appropriate housing is essential for safeguarding the health and wellbeing of a community. Access to housing is a basic human right.

The types and form of housing available to a community and its location has wide ranging impacts on who can live where, the way communities are connected, what our neighbourhoods look like, and how people access jobs, services, and facilities.

In 2021, 150,000 people called Darebin home. In 2041, Darebin's population is forecast to increase by 65,000 residents to 215,000 residents. An additional 28,700 dwellings will likely be required to accommodate these new residents. This is a significant level of change that brings opportunities and challenges, particularly for an established municipality such as Darebin.

1.1 What is Council's Role in Housing?

Council plays an important but not unlimited role managing this change. Most of the 28,700 new houses will be delivered by the private housing market. Housing is influenced by many drivers that are beyond the control of Council such as financial markets, taxation, and migration. The State and Federal Governments play a more direct role in the funding and delivery of public and social housing and the financial incentives, regulations and policies on housing.

A key way that Council can influence housing outcomes is through the preparation of a Housing Strategy for the municipality. Other services Council provides includes housing advocacy to state and federal governments and providing local infrastructure and services, including homelessness outreach, to serve our community.

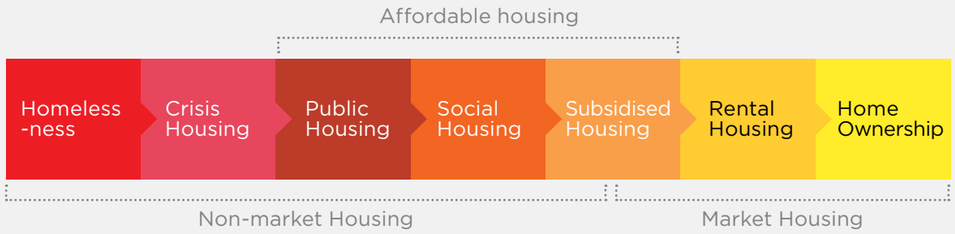
Figure 1: Role of Local Government in Housing

LOCAL GOVERNMENT	STATE GOVERNMENT	FEDERAL GOVERNMENT
Local policies on housing location, design and character Applying zones and built form overlays Structure plans for activity centres and corridors Deciding planning permit applications Housing advocacy Homelessness outreach Rate and local services and infrastructure	Public and community housing State housing policies and direction in Victorian planning schemes Housing targets directions in Plan for Victoria Suite of planning controls Stamp duty and land tax Major infrastructure	Major funding stream for state provision of housing Major infrastructure funding Immigration policies Taxes Grants Welfare support and rental assistance

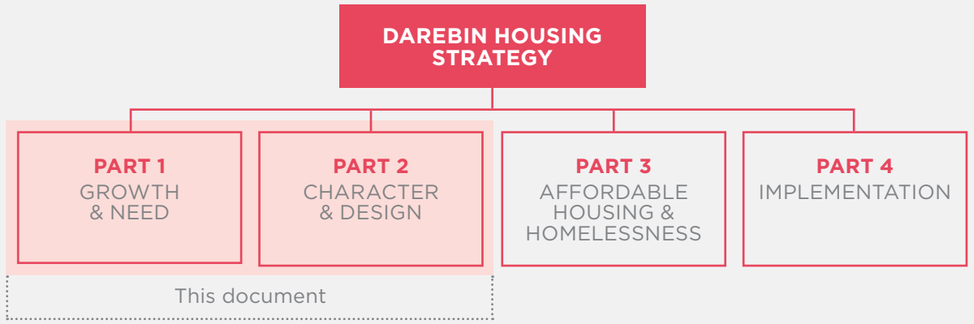
1.2 What is the Darebin Housing Strategy?

The Darebin Housing Strategy is a key strategic document that sits under the Council Plan, is aligned with the 2041 community vision and implements state planning policy and metropolitan planning strategies. It outlines ways in which Council will endeavour to influence housing outcomes in the municipality.

Housing occurs along a continuum. Various housing types and supports are required for people relative to their income and situation. This can extend from crisis accommodation and homelessness services to the supply of private rental housing and home ownership. Council has influence over various housing outcomes along the housing continuum. A key difference is the influence Council has over market housing compared to non-market housing.



The Darebin Housing Strategy has been separated into four parts to distinguish between the different areas of influence Council has over the housing continuum. This allows each aspect to be considered to ensure Council is appropriately responding to the housing crisis.



1.2.1 What will Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy address?

This document relates to Parts 1 and 2 of the Darebin Housing Strategy. Parts 1 and 2 focus on the influence Council has over market housing as the authority responsible for the Darebin Planning Scheme, which is the main tool for managing development within the municipality.

This document sets out Council's vision and framework for managing population growth and residential development over a 15-year period.

It sets out the preferred locations for increased housing growth and the type of housing that is required to meet the needs of our diverse and changing community. It is first and foremost a strategic planning document that will be used to inform changes to planning policies and controls within the Darebin Planning Scheme so that clear direction can be provided about where and how housing growth and residential development should occur.

Parts 1 and 2 seek to meet the requirements of Planning Practice Note 90: Planning for housing. Specifically, Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy will define a vision for future housing in Darebin and provide policy guidance on:

- The preferred location for residential development and the level of change expected across the municipality through a new Residential Development Framework (RDF).
- Avenues to support housing diversity to ensure the right types of housing is provided in response to the community's various needs, ages, genders, abilities, and income levels.
- How new development should be designed to ensure it responds to the character of our existing neighbourhoods while accommodating change.
- Ways to encourage design excellence and sustainable and climate resilient design in new development.

Darebin's current Housing Strategy was first prepared in 2013 and revised in 2015. Since this period, Darebin has seen significant population growth and residential development. There have also been significant changes to State policy and planning provisions, including new residential zones. A new strategy is required to manage change and identify where increased housing should be directed more effectively.

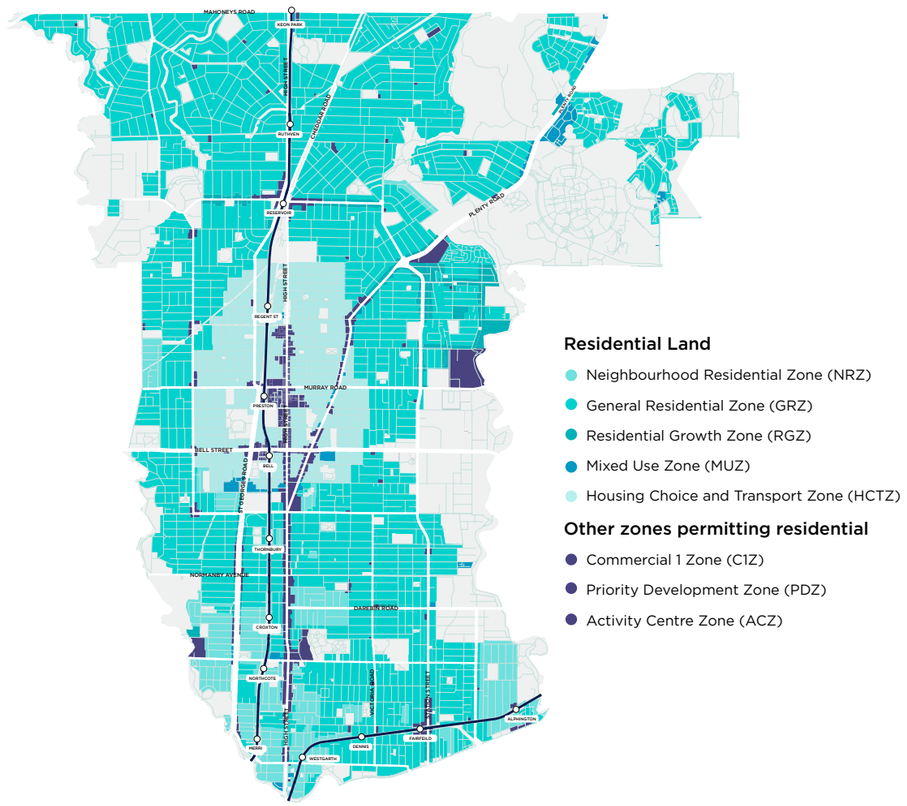
Where does Parts 1 and 2 of the Strategy apply?

Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy applies to residentially zoned land within the municipality. This includes land in the following residential zones:

- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)
- General Residential Zone (GRZ)
- Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)
- Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)
- Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)

It does not directly relate to land within other zones that allow for residential development such as the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z) or Priority Development Zone (PDZ), however some of the policy it defines can be applied to residential development within these zones.

Darebin residential zoning map



1.2.2 What will Part 3 of the Housing Strategy address?

Part 3 of the Housing Strategy will be a separate document that considers areas of influence Council has over non-market housing, such as social and affordable housing and homelessness services. There is a clear need to explore strategies and actions to increase the supply of specialist social and affordable housing within the municipality.

Opportunities that Council will explore to influence better social and affordable housing outcomes through Part 3 of the Housing Strategy will include, amongst others:

- Partnerships with service providers, community housing providers, and other levels of government to facilitate outcomes.
- The lease and development of suitable Council-owned land for affordable housing.
- Expanded research and advocacy actions on behalf of its residents and service providers to other levels of government.
- New policy and mechanisms to guide negotiated agreements with developers that seek affordable and social housing contributions through private development.
- Providing support to people in housing crisis by directing them to local services.

These options will be considered as part of an integrated strategy in Part 3 to ensure due consideration is given to this important topic.

1.2.3 What will Part 4 of the Housing Strategy address

Part 4 will comprise the documentation to support a planning scheme amendment to implement the Housing Strategy and a more detailed implementation plan.

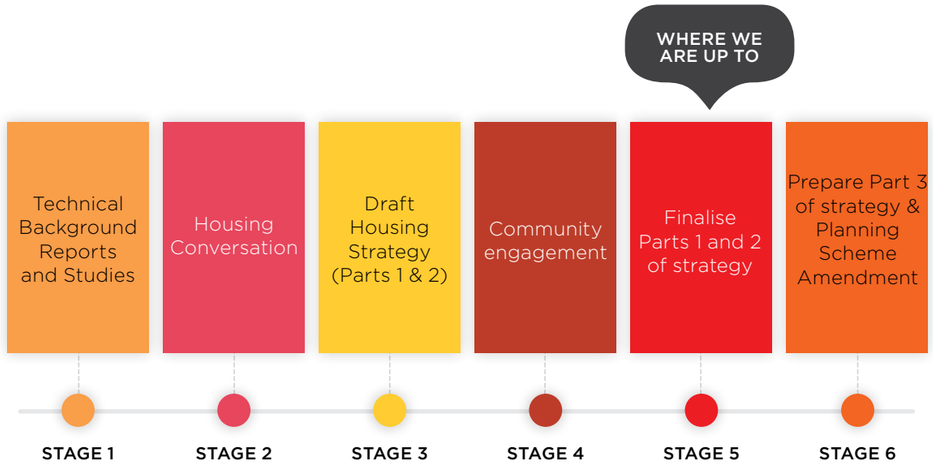
It will outline details on specific changes to the Darebin Planning Scheme that will be made to implement the strategy, including new residential zones, local policy and other planning controls. The future planning scheme amendment will include public exhibition, providing community a chance for community to make submissions on the proposed changes before finalisation.

1.3 How was Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy Developed?

Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy are based on detailed technical work to understand the population growth, demographic changes, and housing needs of the existing and future community. It has considered the existing housing stock, recent development trends, and the current capacity of Darebin's residentially zoned land to accommodate development. It has also considered existing State, regional, and local policy related to housing.

Project Stages

This document was prepared across a number of stages:



Document Structure

Parts 1 and 2 should be read in conjunction with the following documents, which were prepared as part of the broader Housing Strategy project:

- Darebin Housing Demand & Supply Analysis (SGS, 2020) and Addendum (SGS, 2023)
- Darebin Neighbourhood Character Study: Existing Character Report (Ethos Urban, 2021)

The document is structured as follows:

- **Housing in Darebin**

  This section provides an overview of the context and housing challenges that Darebin is facing and this strategy is responding to. It includes details on the following:

  - **Population & Housing Context:** provides information about population and demographics, the policy context, current housing stock, and existing planning controls.
  - **Drivers of Change & Challenges:** identifies the housing demands and challenges the municipality will face as the population changes and grows to 2041.

- **Vision, Principles & Outcomes**

  Outlines the overarching vision and principles that underpin the strategy as well as the housing outcomes, or goals of the strategy.

- **Parts 1: Growth & Need**

  Part 1 outlines the strategic directions and actions that will be taken to achieve the vision in relation to:

  - **Housing Growth:** strategic directions on the scale and location of residential development within the municipality, including:

    > The Residential Development Framework (RDF)

    > Infrastructure, Services, & Transport

  - **Housing Need:** strategic directions on the type and form of housing that we need, including:

    > Housing Diversity

    > Accessible & Specialised Housing

- **Part 2: Character & Design**

  Part 2 outlines the strategic directions and actions that will be taken to achieve the vision in relation to:

  - **Housing Character:** strategic directions on the how development can respond to the valued characteristics of Darebin's neighbourhoods, including:

    > Neighbourhood Character

    > Landscape Character

  - **Housing Design:** outlines strategic directions on how our housing looks, feels, and performs, including:

    > Design Excellence

    > Sustainable & Resilient Design

- **Action Plan**

  The final section outlines an Action Plan for Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy. The actions from each section of the strategy are listed and timeframes and responsibilities are assigned. It includes a process of monitoring and review to ensure the actions are implemented successfully.

Housing in Darebin

A Housing Strategy needs to understand who we are, how we live, what we value, and how this will likely change in the future. This is fundamental to understanding the housing needs and challenges the community is facing and the new challenges around the corner. This allows us to plan and respond effectively to address community need.

The following sections provide an overview of the current and future population and housing context of Darebin. The key housing needs and challenges for Darebin are defined. These form the basis of the strategic directions and actions that are outlined in following sections.

2.0 Population & Housing Context

Darebin's diverse population has changed as it has grown over the last 10 years. On average we are older, more likely to live alone in smaller housing, and work from home in professional roles. We are also less likely to own our homes outright.

An accurate understanding of Darebin's current population and household make-up is fundamental for preparing an informed Housing Strategy. The following provides an overview of who we are, how we live, and the relevant planning policy context for housing in Darebin.

For further details, please refer to Darebin Housing Demand & Supply Analysis (SGS, 2020) and Addendum (SGS, 2023).

2.1 Who We Are

Current Population

In 2021, 150,000 residents called Darebin home. This represented a population increase of over 7,300 people since 2011.

Looking back further, Darebin's population has increased by over 25,000 people over the last two decades. This is a significant level of growth that has shifted the demographic of the municipality.

Darebin's population is highly diverse and has a wide range of living arrangements. This creates the need for a wide variety of dwelling types. Like all of Victoria, Darebin's population growth has been underpinned by an ageing population. At the same time however, Darebin is also attracting younger residents. Compared to greater Melbourne, Darebin has a greater proportion of young adults (20 to 34 years) and parents and homebuilders (35 to 49 years). This has driven population growth.

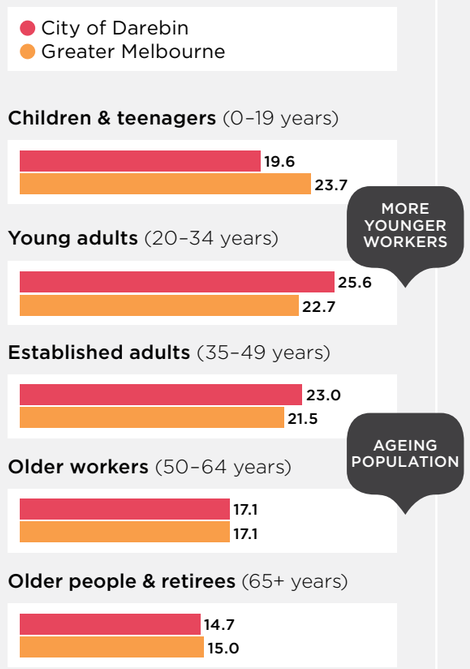
Figure 2: Darebin population growth (2011–2023)

POPULATION
155,700
ERP 2023

NEW RESIDENTS
12,800
SINCE 2011

37
Median age Darebin

Figure 3: Darebin Age Profile compared to Greater Melbourne



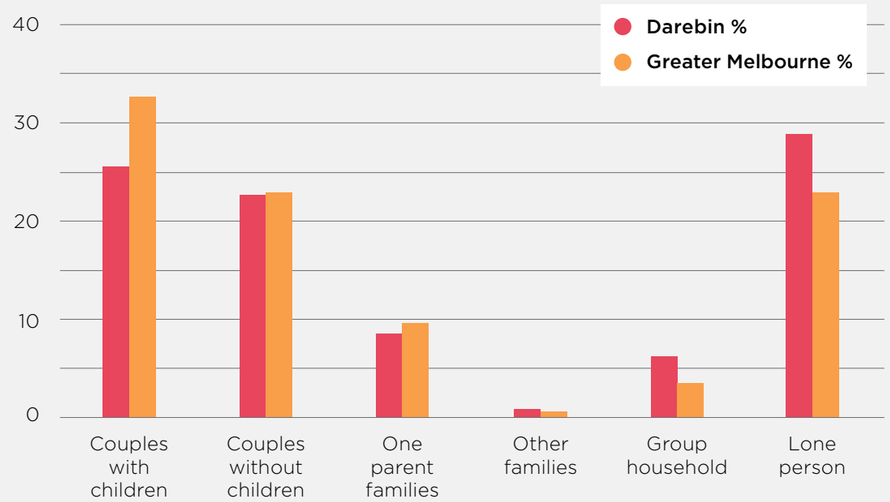
(ABS Census 2021)

Household Size and Type

The changing demographic of Darebin's population is reflected in household types and size trends. In 2021, there were 61,800 households in Darebin. Almost two thirds of these were one (31.3%) and two (30.6%) person households. The percentage of these household sizes has increased over the last ten years, resulting in a lower average household size, down from 2.45 persons in 2011 to 2.34 persons in 2011.

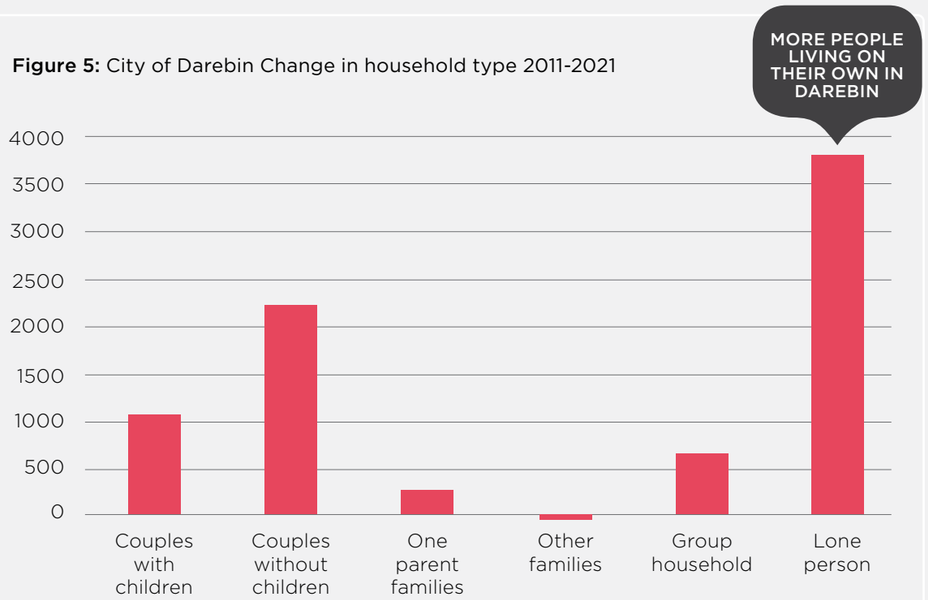
The most common household type in Darebin in 2021 was lone person, followed by couples with children. Darebin accommodates a higher proportion of lone person households than the Greater Melbourne average likely owing to the ageing population and dominant proportion of younger age groups, both of which are more likely to live in smaller households.

Figure 4: Darebin household types compared to Greater Melbourne



(ABS Census 2021)

Figure 5: City of Darebin Change in household type 2011-2021



(ABS Census 2021)

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Community

The Darebin region is acknowledged as a heartland of Melbourne's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community. Some of the most significant Victorian organisations for Aboriginal people have been established and continue to be located in the City of Darebin. Council values this as a unique asset and recognises an obligation to maintain the momentum of initiatives that support enhanced outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander community members who live in, work, and visit Darebin.

In 2021, there were 1,444 Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Darebin in 862 households. This represents one of the largest proportions (1% of total population) of Aboriginal residents of the 31 municipalities in Greater Melbourne (0.7%).

OF THE 862 ABORIGINAL AND TORRES STRAIT ISLANDER HOUSEHOLDS:

17%
were couple families with one or more children, a lower proportion than overall in Darebin (26%).

14%
were in group households, a higher proportion than overall in Darebin (7%).

19%
were couples without children, a lower proportion than overall in Darebin (23%).

25%
were in lone person households, a lower proportion than overall in Darebin (29.5%).

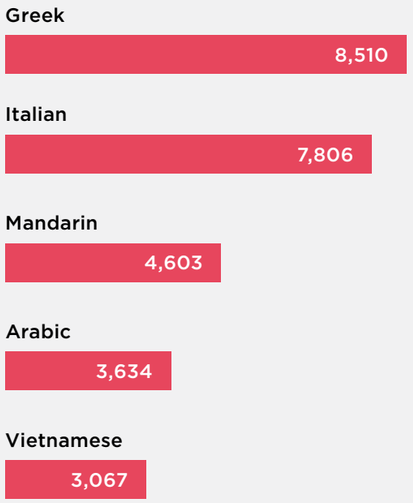
20.5%
were one-parent families, a higher proportion than overall in Darebin (9%).

Cultural and Linguistic Diversity

Darebin has a diverse community with residents having a wide variety of backgrounds. In 2021:

- 52.8% of residents identified with an ancestry other than Australian or English.
- 31.4% of residents were born overseas.
- 32.3% used a language other than English at home.

Figure 6: Top five languages other than English spoken at home in Darebin (2021)



Socio-Economic Indicators

Darebin's population works across a diverse range of industries. In comparison to Greater Melbourne, Darebin's workforce has a larger proportion of professionals and managers compared to the Greater Melbourne average.

This is also reflected in the number of Darebin residents who hold a tertiary qualification, which has increased since 2011. Compared to Greater Melbourne, Darebin also has a greater proportion of university attending residents owing to the presence of La Trobe University in the municipality.

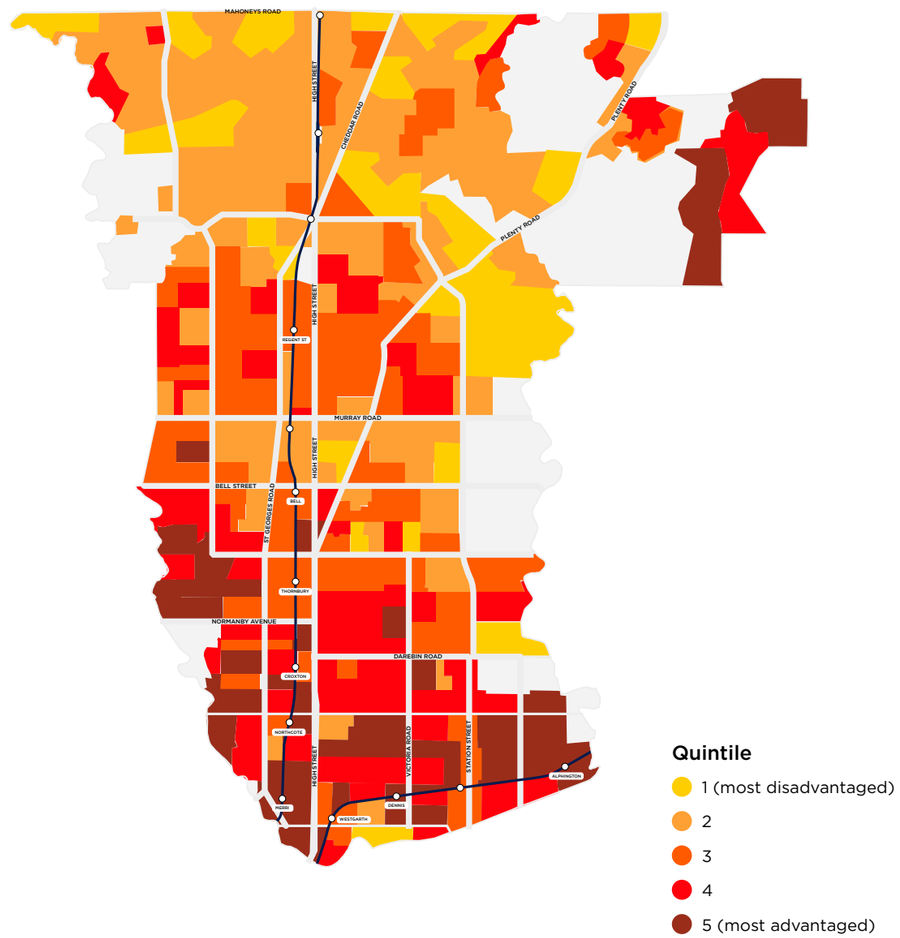
As a result, residents in Darebin have seen a shift towards employment in higher paid industries.

While Darebin overall is considered one of the more advantaged municipalities nationally, variation is high within the municipality.

Socio-Economic Indexes for Areas (SEIFA) is a score that summarises the socio-economic characteristics of an area based on key factors such as income, education and skilled employment. It helps to provide a spatial view of socio-economic characteristics.

As shown in the map below, more advantaged households are focused in the south of the municipality compared to less advantaged households in the north and east. This suggests that impacts from fluctuations in housing costs are not likely to be felt evenly across the municipality.

Figure 7: Index of relative socio-economic disadvantage throughout Darebin



2.2 How We live

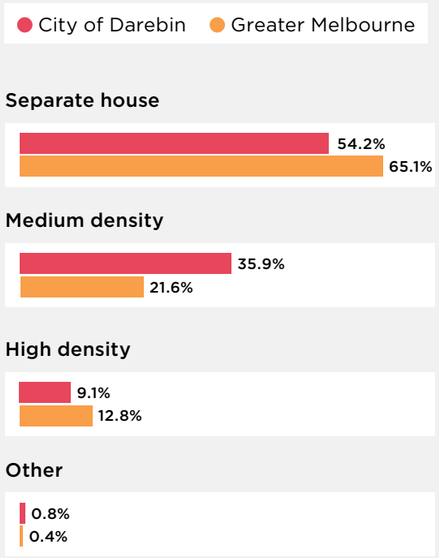
History of housing in Darebin

Darebin is on the Country of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the East Kulin who have occupied these lands for over 40,000 years. The area now known as Darebin has traditionally been a significant area for Wurundjeri people, who would have spent the summer months near the banks of the Darebin and Merri creeks. These waterways, which were inhabited by platypus, water rats, and fish, would have provided reliable food sources. The silcrete outcrops at 'Mount Cooper' were also likely a source of materials used for making stone tools.

Colonisation in Melbourne began from 1830. Soon after, land in Northcote became part of the street planning system. By 1840, all land in Darebin had been sold to European graziers or prospectors, and homesteads and mansions started to spread northwards. During the 1880s land boom workers from compact inner-city suburbs moved out to larger homes in Northcote and Preston, largely along tram and train routes. By the 1950s, higher rates of car ownership linked to suburban expansion throughout the less accessible parts of Darebin.

In the 21st century, higher density housing has mainly been focused on main roads and areas close to public transport and activity centres. Lower-order medium density development, such as units and townhouses, have increased in numbers in areas beyond the main transport corridors.

Figure 8: Darebin housing types compared to Greater Melbourne



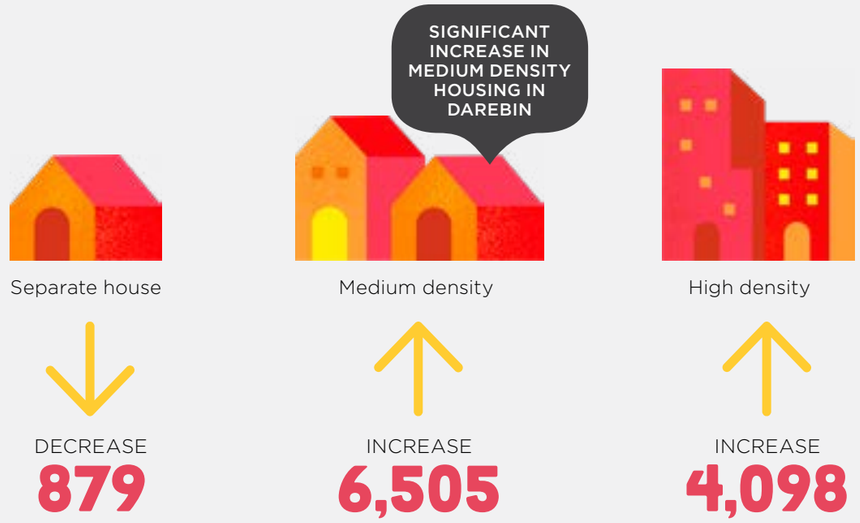
(ABS Census 2021)

Housing Stock & Recent Development

In 2021, Darebin had 68,300 dwellings. Most housing in Darebin is separate dwellings (54%). In 10 years prior to 2021, an additional 9,800 dwellings were constructed in Darebin. This consisted of 6,500 medium density dwellings (semi-detached, terrace or row houses and townhouses) and 4,100 high density dwellings (apartments). This has significantly diversified Darebin's housing stock, increasing choice and affordability, and enabling people to enter the housing market in Darebin who might otherwise move further out.

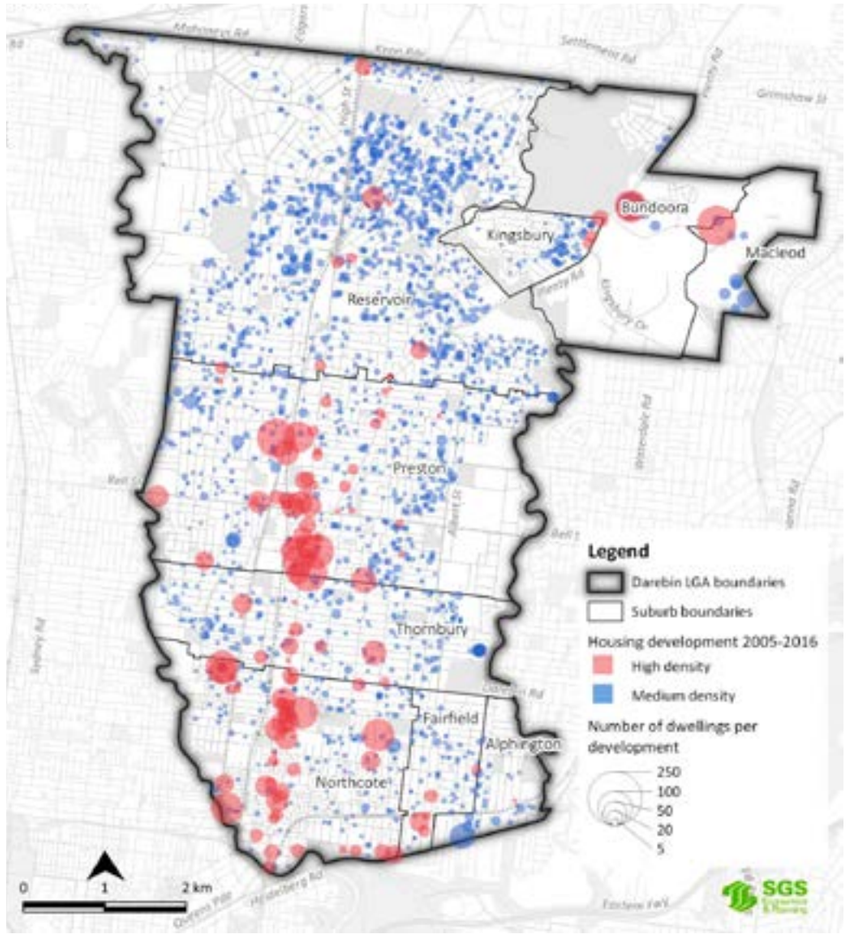
Figure 9: Change in housing types, Darebin 2011-2021

(ABS Census 2021)



Dwelling typologies vary across the municipality. There are higher numbers of high-density housing (apartments) in the south of the municipality and a prevalence of new medium density housing (units and townhouses) in the north. This is partly the result of different development trends over the last 10 years. The highly accessible characteristics and land values of the southern and middle parts of the municipality have driven apartment development. While in the northern and less accessible areas of the municipality that have lower land values, significant increases in multi-unit and townhouse development have occurred.

Figure 10: Distribution of development 2005-2016 (SGS, 2020)



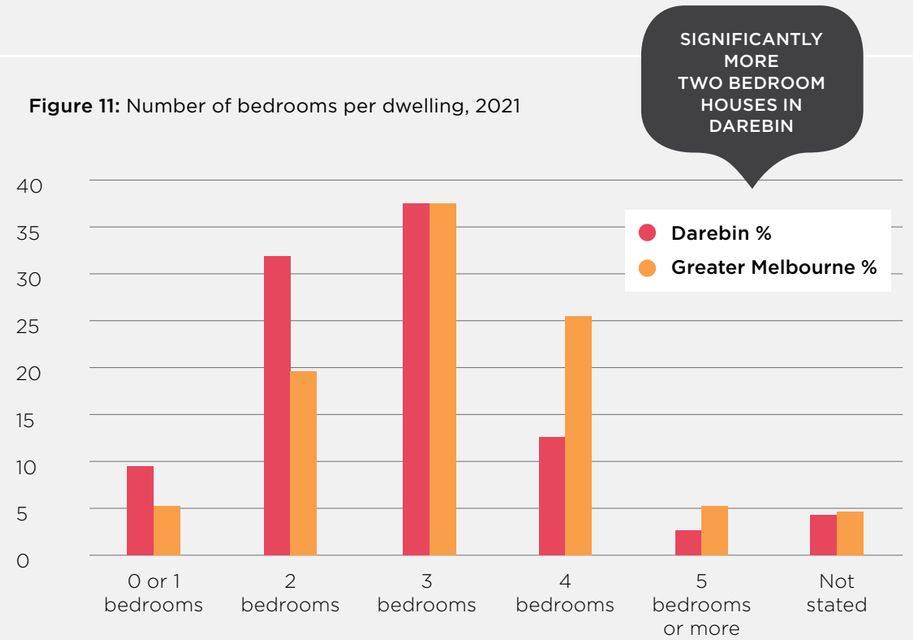
Housing Preferences

Over time, medium and high density housing is becoming a more common housing choice, particularly for couples without children, group households and lone person households. These households choose to live in smaller dwellings because they are more affordable and closer to public transport, shops and services.

While younger adults, particularly lone person households and couples without children, are increasingly likely to live in medium and high density housing, older adults overwhelmingly live in separate houses. For instance, close to 80% of couples without children that are aged 45 and over live in separate housing. This points to potential barriers to downsizing for this population group.

While three-bedroom dwellings make up the greatest proportion of housing in Darebin (38%), most new housing has one or two bedrooms. As a result, compared to the Greater Melbourne average, Darebin has a significantly higher proportion of one and two-bedroom dwellings. This has increased housing size diversity in response to demand for smaller households. The number of three bedroom houses has however decreased as a proportion of overall housing.

Figure 11: Number of bedrooms per dwelling, 2021



(ABS Census 2021)

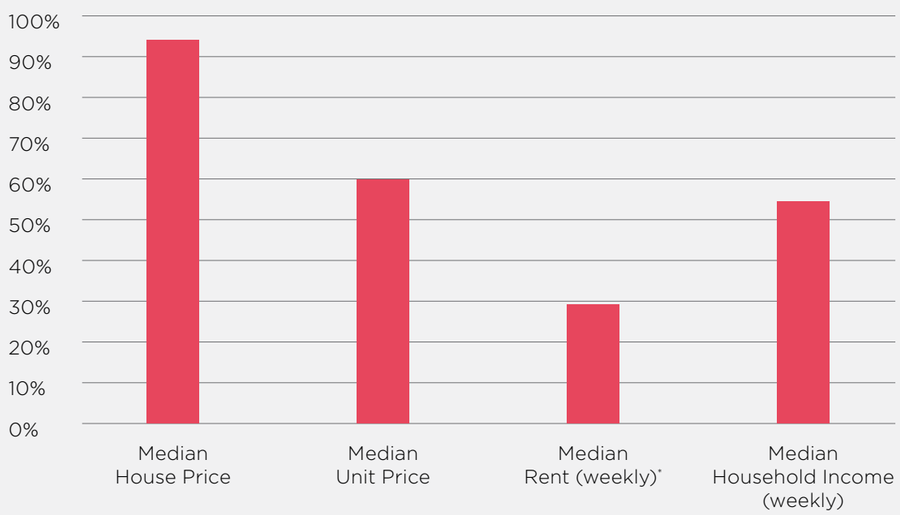
Affordability and Tenure

Housing affordability refers to the cost of housing relative to household income. Median house and unit prices have increased at a faster rate than household incomes in Darebin over the ten years to 2021. There is a structural housing affordability issue within Darebin and throughout Australia, whereby incomes have not increased at the same rate as housing costs over multiple decades. This makes home ownership increasingly difficult to attain.

While weekly median rents increased at a lower rate than median weekly household income, this does not factor in significant recent increases that have seen rents increase approximately 29% between December 2021 ($390) and December 2023 ($500).

House prices in Darebin have historically been more affordable for those on low and moderate incomes. This has changed significantly in recent years as land prices have increased in historically lower- and middle-income suburbs of the municipality. This has significant implications for housing affordability and ensuring that Darebin continues to be home to a diverse community and a place where everyone can live.

Figure 12: Change in median house and unit price and median weekly household income, Darebin 2011-2021

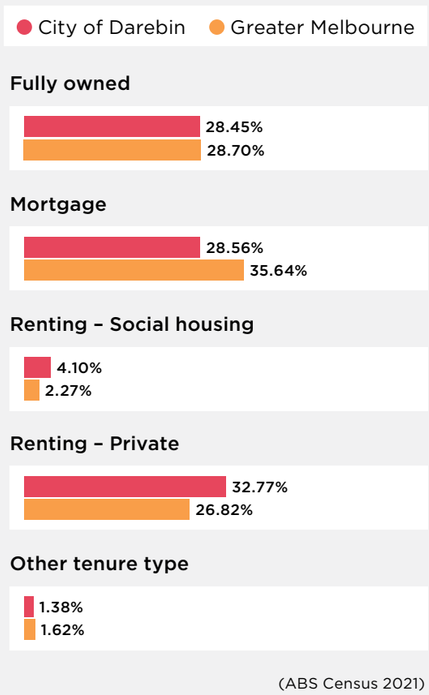


(ABS Census, 2011 & 2021 and Victorian Property Sales Report, Valuer-General Victoria, 2022)

* Median rent increase does not include recent increases since 2021 that have seen rents increase on average 29% between December 2021 and December 2023 alone.

MORE PEOPLE RENTING IN DAREBIN

Figure 13: Darebin housing tenure by households compared to Greater Melbourne



(ABS Census 2021)

Darebin has a higher proportion of households renting (37%) than the Greater Melbourne average (29.2%). Compared to 2011, more households rent and less own their home outright. A similar proportion of households owned their home with a mortgage.

9% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households owned their home, a similar proportion to 2016 and significantly lower than overall Darebin households (29%). 74% of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander households were renting, up from 65% in 2016 and a much higher proportion than overall Darebin households (37%). 19% were renting in social housing (down from 24% in 2016). 4% were renting through housing cooperatives or community groups (compared to less than 0.5 per cent of overall households).

Social and Affordable Housing Gap

In 2021, 2,534 households across Darebin lived in social housing, a similar number to 2011 (2,550). This has occurred however at the same time as the proportion of social housing dwellings decreasing relative to the supply of housing in Darebin, falling from 5.6% in 2016 to 5.3% in 2021.

There is currently a significant shortage of affordable housing in the City of Darebin (SGS 2021). There are approximately 3,600 social housing dwellings. With almost 10,700 Darebin households in need of housing assistance, it is estimated that the City of Darebin has a shortfall of over 7,000 affordable housing dwellings. This is expected to increase to a shortfall of over 11,000 affordable dwellings by 2036.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING SHORTAGE IN DAREBIN:

7,000 2021

11,000 2036

(SGS 2021)

2.3 Strategic & Policy Context

This section provides a brief summary of the main State and local strategies, policies, and plans that have been considered when preparing this strategy.

State Strategies & Plans

Victoria's Housing Statement: The decade ahead 2024-2034

This statement outlines a package of planning reforms to increase housing supply in Melbourne and Victoria. Key aspects of the plan which have implications for housing in Darebin are:

- Update of Plan Melbourne to a new Plan Victoria.
- Reforms to the planning system to shift decision-making powers to the Minister for some major developments.
- Calling 10 activity centres across Melbourne for fast-track planning frameworks to deliver 60,000 houses, including our Preston High Street Activity Centre.
- Redevelop all Melbourne public housing towers, including on Holmes Street, Northcote.
- Streamlined development pathways for medium-high density housing proposals which include 10% affordable housing.

Plan for Victoria

Plan for Victoria is the metropolitan strategy for Melbourne and sets out a vision and five pillars of action to manage growth in regional Victoria and Melbourne to 2050. The plan is structured around five pillars, including: self-determination, housing, jobs, infrastructure and sustainability.

Initiatives of the plan include:

- Housing Targets for all local government areas.
- The Activity Centre Program, which is implementing new planning controls in 60 centres, including Preston and Thornbury.
- Increasing social and affordable housing by exploring policy targets.
- Updating the Better Apartment Dersign Standards Design Standards.
- Updating car and bicycle parking rates.
- Reviewing infrastructure contribution mechanisms.
- Improving ESD and better

Planning Policy Framework (PPF)

The Planning Policy Framework (PPF) of the Darebin Planning Scheme sets out State and local policy guidance in relation to land use and development. The PPF contains various policies at both the State and Local levels that direct the provision of housing and guide residential development.

The following provides a summary of key state planning policies across a number of themes (note: this has not yet been updated to incorporate Plan for Victoria:

Settlement

- Land use planning should seek to accommodate projected population growth over at least a 15-year period and define where this growth should occur.
- Housing growth should be directed to areas that are well serviced by public transport and services, such as activity centres, transport corridors, and innovation, employment, and education clusters.
- Higher density housing should be directed into and proximate to Major Activity Centres (Preston Central, Northland - East Preston, Northcote and Reservoir) and Neighbourhood and Local centres at a scale commensurate to each centre's role and function to support local living and revitalisation.

Housing supply

- Greater choice and diversity of housing should be provided in accessible locations close to jobs, services and public transport that meets the community's needs.
- The supply of social and affordable housing should be increased, particularly in well-accessible locations.

20 Minute Neighbourhoods

- Accessible, safe, and attractive neighbourhoods where people can access most of their daily needs within a 20-minute walk, cycle or public transport trip from their home should be created.
- The concept of a 20 minute neighbourhood requires that a neighbourhood is safe, accessible and well connected, facilitates thriving local economies, provides services and destinations that support local living, are resilient to climate change and have a high quality public realm, and support housing densities that make local services and transport viable.

Housing Design

- Development should create safe, healthy, functional and enjoyable urban environments that contribute to a sense of place and cultural identity.
- Lot consolidation should be encouraged to facilitate better design and amenity outcomes for higher density developments in accessible locations.
- New development should contribute towards neighbourhood character and protect areas of heritage significance.
- Housing should be well-designed and provide high levels of internal and external amenity, incorporating universal design and adaptable internal dwelling design.

Zones, Overlays & Particular Provisions

There are five residential zones in the Darebin Planning Scheme, the Neighbourhood Residential Zone, General Residential Zone, Residential Growth Zone, Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) and Mixed Use Zone.

- The **Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)** recognises areas of predominately single and double storey development. The NRZ aims to manage and ensure that development respects identified neighbourhood character, heritage, environmental or landscape characteristics. The NRZ sets a mandatory height limit of two storeys, unless otherwise varied by a schedule to the NRZ.
- The **General Residential Zone (GRZ)** encourages development that respects the neighbourhood character of the area as well as a diversity of housing types and housing growth, particularly in locations offering good access to services and transport. The GRZ sets a mandatory height limit of three storeys, unless otherwise varied by a schedule to the GRZ.
- The **Residential Growth Zone (RGZ)** aims to provide housing at increased density and diversity of housing up to and including four storeys in height, in locations offering good access to services and transport including activity centres and town centres. The RGZ states that buildings should not exceed four storeys unless otherwise varied by a Schedule to the RGZ.
- The **Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)** aims to provide housing at increased densities around activity centres and well-serviced locations, close to employment, services and public transport. The HCTZ sets a maximum building height of four storeys for areas shown as HCTZ1. However, if the building is constructed on a large site, then the maximum building height is six storeys. For areas shown as HCTZ2, the maximum building height is three storeys, or four storeys for a large site.

- The **Mixed Use Zone (MUZ)** provides for housing at higher densities as well as commercial, industrial and other uses which complement the mixed use nature of a locality. A building must not exceed the maximum height specified in a Schedule to the MUZ. Other built form restrictions may apply in these instances in the form of Design and Development Overlays.

Clause 55, 57 and 58 of the Darebin Planning Scheme establish state residential design standards against which townhouse and apartment developments are assessed. These provisions shape how residential development is designed in Darebin.

Townhouse and Low-Rise Code

The recently introduced 'Townhouse and Low-Rise Code' (Clause 55) represents one of the biggest changes to how medium density housing is assessed in Victoria in decades. It has replaced ResCode and applies to residential development of up to three storey. The Code is 'deemed-to-comply'. If a development complies with all standards, Council cannot refuse the application and there are no third party appeal rights. The standards relate to neighbourhood character, liveability, external amenity, and sustainability.

The changes have also reduced the number of standards that can be locally varied through a schedule to the zone.

The Code has reduced the scope of local government planner discretion to consider:

- Neighbourhood character policies, statements, and guidelines.
- Urban design, built form, and detailed design policies.
- Environmentally Sustainable Design policies.

If a development is deemed to comply, these policies cannot be considered.

Council Strategies & Plans

Council Plan

Darebin's Council Plan 2025-2029 lays the foundations for the Municipality's short, medium and long term future. The Plan incorporates the Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan and the Darebin 2041 Community Vision and sets out how Council will deliver initiatives and projects to make Darebin an equitable, vibrant and connected community.

The 2025-2029 Council Plan contains the following Strategic Objectives for housing and residential development:

> *5.1 Plan for housing and development that meets the needs of our diverse community.*

A key initiative to achieve this objective is to:

> *5.1.1 Finalise and implement the Housing Strategy including design controls, planning scheme updates and roadmap for increasing social and affordable housing in Darebin.*

A key indicator for this objective is improvements in local planning controls. Key actions include adopting the finalised Darebin Housing Strategy and preparing a Planning Scheme Amendment, to enable and facilitate more diverse, affordable and social housing across the City.

Other Council Plans & Strategies

Other plans and strategies that have informed the preparation of the housing strategy include:

- Breathing Space: the Darebin Open Space Strategy (2019)
- Darebin Transport Strategy 2007-2027 (policies and actions updated 2022)
- Darebin Active and Healthy Ageing Strategy 2011-2021
- Darebin Climate Emergency Plan 2024-2030
- Darebin Economic Land Use Study
- Darebin's Urban Forest Strategy
- Disability Access and Inclusion in Darebin: A community plan of access and inclusion 2021–2026
- Darebin Good Design Guidelines
- Responding to Housing Stress A Local Action Plan 2013 – 2017
- Darebin's various Heritage Studies
- Various Structure Plans and Urban Design Frameworks that apply across Darebin.

2.4 What You Told Us

The Housing Strategy and Neighbourhood Character Statements and Guidelines have been developed in conversation with the community through two stages of consultation.

Housing Conversation

The Housing Conversation ran between 28 June and 8 August 2022. We heard from 464 people across 10 in person pop-up and workshop sessions, an online survey, an online mapping tool and email.

Engagement on draft strategy

Engagement on the draft Housing Strategy (Part 1 & 2) ran between 5 August and 15 September 2024. We heard from 69 participants across in person drop-in sessions and an online survey.

Key themes that emerged from consultation related to:

Green space, trees and vegetation

Trees and vegetation in the public and private realm were highly valued throughout the municipality, with an emphasis on prioritising green space and access to gardens in new development. The role of front and back gardens were recognised as a way to provide space for planting canopy trees and vegetation, as well as a place for children and pets to play.

Appropriate setbacks and lot size

Front setbacks were valued for their landscape contributions to the street character, though were also described as taking land away from more useful living spaces. Lot sizes were brought up in relation to single dwellings being replaced with multi-dwelling developments and lot subdivisions. While the increase to housing supply produced by this style of development was supported by some, others didn't want Darebin's suburbs to absorb more of Melbourne's population growth.

Housing diversity and accessibility

There was a desire for a wide variety of housing sizes, prices, types and styles to retain the existing eclectic range of household types whilst assisting in alleviating the housing crisis. This includes housing that is accessible for people of all abilities and can adapt to changing household needs. Flexible floor plans that can be adapted over time were suggested to improve the adaptability and accessibility of housing.

For more detail about the engagement process and a summary of what the community told us, you can read the Housing Conversation Engagement Summary Report (Conversation Co, 2022) and Draft Housing Strategy Engagement Summary Report (Conversation Co, 2024).

Density and height

Having housing that is located near public transport, local shops, parks and schools was important to the community. While the role of increased densities and heights had in contributing to housing supply was recognised, concerns regarding the impacts of poor design, quality and off-site impacts such as overshadowing were expressed. Higher density housing that is well designed, of high quality and liveable were generally supported, particularly if social and affordable housing was provided.

Housing location

There was a desire to live near public transport and away from busy roads. It was widely seen that housing intensification should be located appropriately, which to some respondents meant away from traditional neighbourhood streets. People saw increasing local housing supply as key to making it more affordable to live in Darebin.

Building design and quality

The community appreciated the contribution that well-kept older homes, such as California bungalows, gave to streetscapes. They expressed that they wanted to see more sustainable design features in new residential developments, including solar panels and materials or gardens that would not exacerbate urban heat.

Height was also a common theme, with many expressing that 4 to 8 stories would be an appropriate height for apartments in Darebin. As for quality, there was wide concern that newer developments, in particular townhouses and apartments, were not being built to quality standards.

3.0 Drivers of Change & Challenges

There are many state, regional, and national forces driving change within Darebin.

3.1 Drivers of Change

There are many state, regional, and national forces driving change within Darebin. Its position as an established inner-city and middle-suburban municipality with many attractors as a place to live means it has been, and will continue to be, a place of significant change and investment.

Metropolitan Context

Darebin's metropolitan position as an established inner-city and middle-suburban municipality in Australia's fastest growing capital city means it is a highly desirable place to live and invest. Over the life of this Housing Strategy, Melbourne will become Australia's largest capital city. While a large percentage of this growth will occur in the outer growth areas of Melbourne, State policy directs that a significant portion (70%) should be directed into established urban areas to create a more sustainable and compact city. Located within 4km of the Melbourne central business district at its southern extent and 10km at its northern extent, Darebin will continue to be a highly desirable place to live.

Population Growth & Demographic Change

Darebin has grown significantly over the last 10 years. Over this same period, the average household size has continued to decrease owing to the ageing population and the growing proportion of the young workforce in the municipality. These demographic changes are placing pressures on our older housing stock with decreasing household sizes meaning fewer people are now occupying more housing.

Increasing land prices is also having an impact on the socio-economic profile of the municipality. This is particularly the case in the better-serviced and more accessible southern areas of the municipality where housing unaffordability means that sections of the community are finding it increasingly difficult to live in the most accessible locations or stay in their neighbourhoods.

Economic Growth & Activity Centres

Darebin contains several key activity centres focused predominantly along our north-south linear transport corridors. Northcote, Preston Central, Northland and Reservoir are Darebin's higher-order activity centres. These centres are major focuses of commercial investment and provide cultural and entertainment opportunities, such as the highly valued Preston Market. The cultural, hospitality, and entertainment offering of Darebin's centres has been and will continue to be a significant attractor for new residents.

Other employment generating and economic drivers of Darebin include the La Trobe University and regionally and locally significant industrial and employment land in Reservoir and east Preston/Thornbury. These locations will continue to be the engine room of Darebin's economy as the focus of employment and services.

Preston (High Street) Activity Centre and High Street (Thornbury) and St Georges Road (Thornbury) Activity Centres are nominated as part of the State Government's Activity Centre Program following the release of the Housing Statement in September 2023 and the State Government is leading the planning for these centres including applying new planning controls in these locations to increase the supply of housing.

La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster

The La Trobe National Employment and Innovation Cluster (NEIC) is one of seven NEICs identified in Plan Melbourne. The La Trobe NEIC is centred around the La Trobe University, East Preston, Northland, and the Austin/Heidelberg medical precinct in the City of Banyule. State and local planning policy directs that the La Trobe NEIC is developed into a high amenity precinct to increase economic growth and establish an integrated and productive education and research, health, and advanced manufacturing precinct. Key to this is the development of a diverse range of higher density housing to support local workers and students. The La Trobe University also has significant plans to transition the campus into a 'University City of the Future' with new education facilities and residential and commercial development.

Infrastructure & Transport

Darebin has key transportation infrastructure including two train lines connecting residents to the CBD and northern growth areas, two tram lines, multiple bus routes, and a road network that consists of regionally significant connections such as Bell Street and Plenty Road. Recent infrastructure upgrades such as the new stations and level crossing removals at Bell Station, Preston Station, and Keon Park station, have increased the efficiency of the network and reconnected communities. The proposed long-term Suburban Rail Loop (SRL) vision of the State Government is proposed to traverse Darebin through La Trobe University and Reservoir, providing connections to Melbourne Airport and other major suburban centres around Melbourne.

Open Space

Darebin has a significant open space network underpinned by the Darebin and Merri Creek corridors and Bundoora parklands. There is also a network of sporting facilities including the Darebin International Sports Centre and Preston Oval. Population growth is placing even greater importance on these existing assets and generating significant need for new and improved spaces. As residents continue to live in higher density housing, the importance of these communal spaces and facilities will increase. Council has made significant investment in community infrastructure including the development of the Northcote Aquatic and Recreation Centre (NARC) and Narrandjeri Stadium and is planning upgrades to the Reservoir Leisure Centre.

Recent Development

Over the last 15 years, Darebin has become an attractive place to invest and develop in response to our growing population. The built environment of Darebin has dramatically changed in some areas. Apartment buildings are now more common in activity centres and along our main transport corridors, in particular High Street Northcote, Thornbury, and southern Preston. Some redundant industrial land is being turned into residential land. Our neighbourhoods have also become denser with new townhouse and unit development creating an even greater presence in our post-war suburbs.

3.2 Our Future Housing Requirements

So that we can plan for housing over the next 15 years it is important to understand our future housing requirements. To understand this, we need to have an idea of the likely population growth and demographic change over this period.

We also need to understand the capacity of our residentially zoned land and the current policies and controls we have in place to know whether we can accommodate this growth in a sustainable way, and if not, the changes required to meet our housing needs.

The following provides an overview of the key findings from the Darebin Housing Demand & Supply Analysis (SGS, 2020) and Addendum (SGS, 2023).

Population and Household Growth

Darebin's population is forecast to grow by 65,000 residents to 215,000 residents by 2041. This represents an increase of 43% or 1.8% per year on average. While the COVID-19 pandemic caused a dip in the resident population between the 2016 and 2021 of 4,800 people, forecast population growth is expected to rebound quickly and return to pre-pandemic levels. The oldest age groups (75+) and some of the youngest age groups (under 24) are likely to grow at the fastest rates. Over this period, household sizes will continue to decrease.

Figure 14: Darebin's forecast population growth (2021-2041)

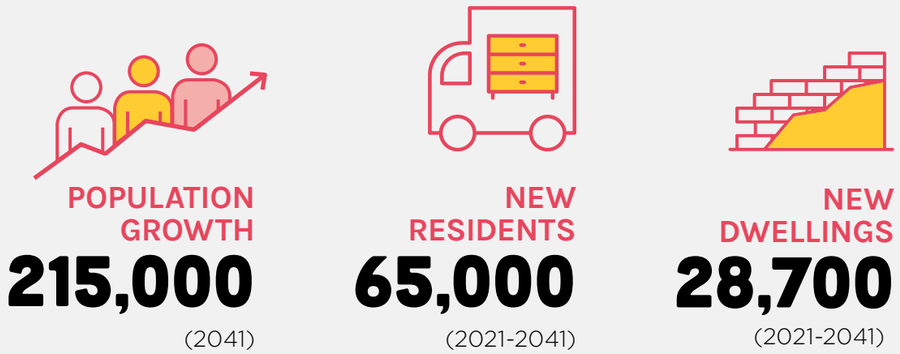
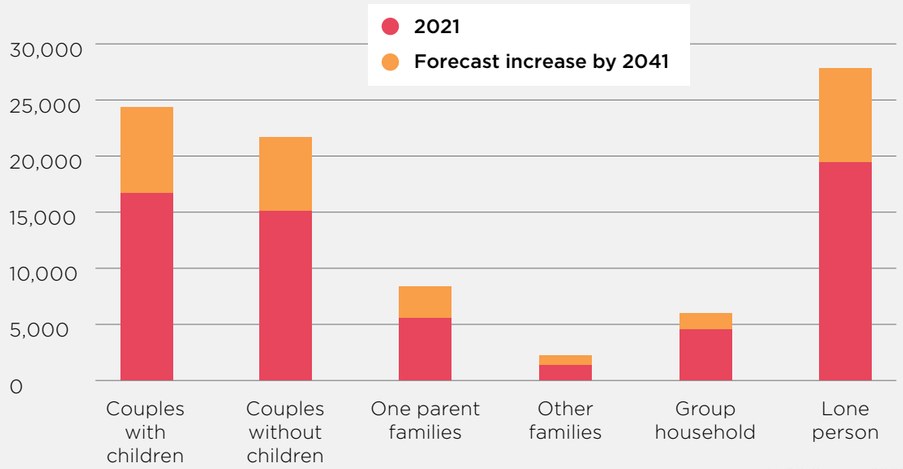


Figure 15: Darebin's forecast household type change (2021-2041)



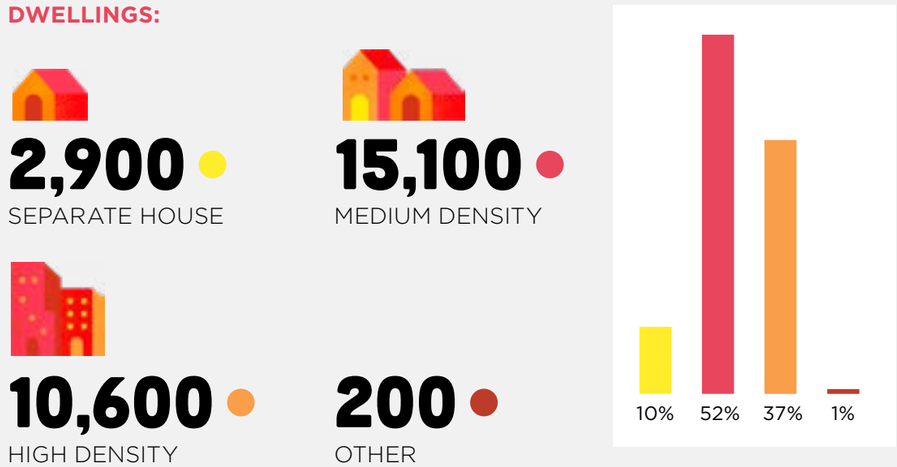
(ABS Census 2021)

Darebin is likely to need 28,700 additional dwellings to accommodate this population growth. This represents a construction rate of 1,400 dwellings per year; an increase on the previous 10 years, which saw approximately 980 new dwellings constructed per year.

Based on projected household types and preferences, this demand will consist largely of medium and high-density housing (15,100 and 10,600 dwellings respectively), as people trade in extra space for location and affordability. While a preference for separate dwellings may remain for some, as an established municipality with limited space for new separate houses, this demand will be met through increased dual-occupancy and medium density housing. It is important that medium density housing provides a range of sizes to accommodate these groups.

While medium density housing will provide the largest share of all new dwellings, demand for high density housing is forecast to grow significantly, largely driven by the preferences of lone person and couples without children households. In 2021, 6,200 dwellings were classified as high density in the municipality. To meet demand by 2041, this will need to more than double to 16,800 dwellings and make up over a third (37%) of all newly constructed dwellings.

Figure 16: Darebin dwelling demand by type 2021-2041



(SGS, 2023)

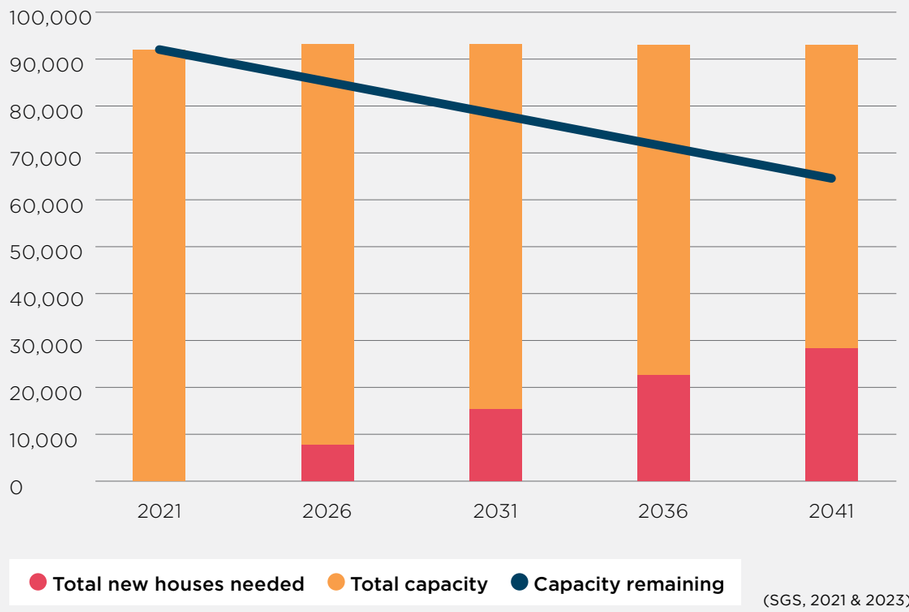
Housing Capacity

Currently there are 68,000 dwellings in Darebin. A capacity model has been prepared to gain an understanding of the potential number of dwellings that could theoretically be developed within the municipality under current planning control and policy settings. The capacity model suggests that 93,000 new dwellings could theoretically be developed within Darebin. This means that the municipality has capacity for three times more dwellings than the projected demand to 2041.

The current planning controls and policies have the potential to meet and exceed Darebin's housing demand projections by over 60,000 dwellings; this would take us well beyond a 15 year period as required by State planning policy. Assuming the current rate of demand for new housing of 1,400 dwellings per year will continue, Darebin has the theoretical potential to accommodate growth for the next 60 years.

The policies and controls we currently have in place are therefore working to ensure Darebin can continue to be a place that can house a growing population. Certain policy settings that have informed our approach to housing to date will therefore be carried across from our previous housing strategy. However, a range of policy changes are required to improve our housing, to meet the community's changing needs, focus growth in the most accessible areas, and to address our housing challenges.

Figure 17: Darebin housing capacity under current planning controls



(SGS, 2021 & 2023)

Housing Targets

Following the release of Plan for Victoria, the State Government has announced housing targets for all local government areas across Victoria, including Darebin. A target has been set for all municipalities, which specifies their share of the extra 2.24 million homes needed in the state by 2051.

A housing target of 69,000 new dwellings has been set for Darebin. This means that we need to ensure that the Darebin Planning Scheme identifies enough realistic opportunities for new development to deliver the target number of homes by 2051.

When the Housing Strategy is implemented into the planning scheme, Council will test the capacity generated by any changes to residential zones using the State Government's Housing Capacity Assessment Platform, to ensure we meet the housing target.

DAREBIN HOUSING TARGET

69,000

DWELLINGS

2051

3.3 Our Challenges

Darebin has the theoretical capacity to accommodate forecast population growth to 2041. However, challenges exist to ensure new housing is meeting the community's needs and expectations about where it should be ideally located and how the new housing should look, feel, and function.

Based on the findings from Part 1 regarding the future population growth and demographic change, policy context, and views of the community, a range of housing challenges have been identified.

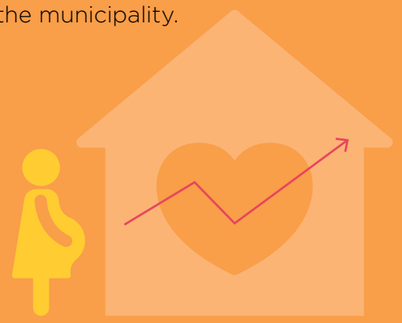
The Housing Strategy seeks to address these housing challenges through strategic directions and actions outlined in Part 2. The strategic directions have been designed in a way to ensure that Council can still meet obligations to provide for sufficient capacity to meet housing demand for at least 15 years, while also addressing other housing priorities. Our significant capacity buffer provides us with the opportunity to rethink existing policies that may not be functioning in the most effective way to address our challenges.

Our significant capacity buffer provides us with the opportunity to rethink existing policies that may not be functioning in the most effective way to address our challenges.

HOUSING CHALLENGES:

ACCOMMODATING POPULATION GROWTH

Darebin's population is forecast to grow by 65,000 to 215,000 residents by 2041, requiring the need for 28,700 new dwellings. Darebin's state housing target is 69,000 new dwellings by 2051. This is a significant increase on the previous 10-20 years of growth in the municipality.



DIRECTING DEVELOPMENT TO BETTER LOCATIONS

Continuing to ensure the right housing is provided in the right locations close to jobs, services, and public transport. Recent development trends in Darebin have successfully directed a high portion of housing into activity centres and along public transport corridors. However, a significant amount of medium density development has occurred in dispersed locations, including places removed from activity centres and public transport.

INCREASING INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICE PROVISION

Providing new and improved infrastructure, facilities, and services in response to population growth and residential development. This is particularly challenging for an established municipality with high levels of projected population growth such as Darebin where available vacant land to construct new infrastructure and provide services is scarce.

PROVIDING THE RIGHT TYPES AND SIZES OF HOUSING

Ensuring that the new infill development that occurs across the municipality is the right size to accommodate the needs of our community. Increased numbers of small dwellings have appeared in Darebin in recent years, catering to the downsizing ageing population cohorts and increased numbers of younger age workers. However, it is important that medium and high density homes are still provided for young families to ensure they are not displaced.

ENSURING HOUSING IS ADAPTABLE AND FUNCTIONAL

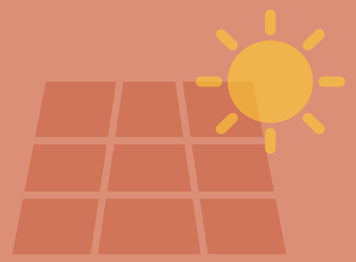
Ensuring the housing we build is fit for purpose and responds to the specialised needs of our most vulnerable residents. The majority of housing being delivered through the private market in Darebin (and across the state) does not support the needs of elderly residents or those with limited mobility.

ADRESSING HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Addressing issues of housing affordability and a lack of affordable housing to help address the current housing crisis. Ensuring Darebin is a place where people at all income levels can continue to live is a great challenge that requires the attention of all levels of government.

INCREASING THE ENVIRONMENTAL PERFORMANCE AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE OF HOUSING

Ensuring housing is sustainably designed to decrease running costs, limit emissions, reduce our impact on the environment, and embed climate resilience in the community. This is vitally important as the impacts of climate change continue to develop and worsen.



INCREASING THE DESIGN QUALITY OF HOUSING

Designing our housing in a way that achieves design excellence and responds to the community's values. Consultation with the Darebin community emphasised the need to elevate the design of housing and the importance of green, attractive, and sustainable neighbourhoods as inherent to livelihoods.

Vision, Principles & Outcomes

Parts 1 and 2 of the strategy includes the following key elements.

VISION

Defines the overall aspirational goal of the strategy.

5

PRINCIPLES

The principles are the guiding values of the strategy that underpin the vision and outcomes.

8

OUTCOMES

The outcomes define what the strategy is trying to achieve. They address key themes across three housing pillars: Housing Growth & Location, Housing Supply, and Housing Design.

26

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

The strategic directions set out how the outcomes will be achieved.

35

ACTIONS

The actions set out the tangible steps that will be taken to implement and deliver on the strategic directions. An Action Plan has been developed in Section 7.0 consolidating the actions into a five-year work program that defines timeframes, governance, and processes of monitoring and review.

4.0 Vision, Principles & Outcomes

4.1 Vision Statement

Housing in Darebin will sustainably meet the needs of our diverse and growing community, foster well-connected, liveable and accessible neighbourhoods, and enhance the municipality's unique sense of place.

4.2 Principles

The Vision is underpinned by five guiding principles.

INCLUSIVE & EQUITABLE

Housing should be provided for all members of Darebin's diverse community in an affordable way to ensure nobody is displaced.

CONNECTED & LIVEABLE

Housing should be directed into the most accessible and well-serviced locations to provide residents with easy access to daily needs.

RESILIENT & GREEN

Housing should be responsive to a changing climate, allow residents to live a low-carbon and resilient future, and contribute towards cooler and greener neighbourhoods.

ATTRACTIVE & DURABLE

Housing should be designed to enhance our streets and neighbourhoods and celebrate our heritage.

FUNCTIONAL & ACCESSIBLE

Housing should enhance the wellbeing of all residents and allow people of all genders to age in place.

4.3 Outcomes

Eight housing outcomes have been set that will measure the success of Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy in achieving its vision. Each outcome relates to a specific theme across four housing pillars: Housing Growth, Housing Need, Housing Character, and Housing Design. The outcomes will be achieved through a range of strategic directions discussed in the following sections.

HOUSING GROWTH

▶ *quick link to section*

OUTCOME 1

Housing growth is directed to the most accessible locations close to services, facilities, and infrastructure to sustainably meet the demands of Darebin's growing population.

OUTCOME 2

Infrastructure and services are planned for and delivered in response to the changing needs of the growing community.

HOUSING NEED

▶ *quick link to section*

OUTCOME 3

Housing diversity is increased in response to the community's equally diverse needs and provides housing choice & affordability close to jobs and services.

OUTCOME 4

The proportion of housing that supports residents throughout the lifecycle and responds to specialised needs has been increased to ensure residents are not displaced.

HOUSING CHARACTER

▶ *quick link to section*

OUTCOME 5

New development responds to the valued characteristics of neighbourhoods in a way that balances housing change while supporting the identity and sense of place of the municipality.

OUTCOME 6

New development enhances the landscape qualities of our neighbourhoods and contributes towards the urban canopy within the municipality

HOUSING DESIGN

▶ *quick link to section*

OUTCOME 7

New development achieves design excellence, respects heritage, and supports the wellbeing of residents to maintain the liveability of our municipality.

OUTCOME 8

New housing is located and designed in a way that seeks to achieve a zero-carbon future and supports community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Part 1: Growth & Need

5.0 Housing Growth

Darebin has experienced significant population growth and residential development over the last decade. This is expected to continue to 2041.

Future housing growth will not be experienced evenly across the municipality. Some locations will accommodate significantly more growth than other areas. Planning policy assists with guiding where housing growth should occur and the types and forms of housing that make up this growth.

As an inner urban municipality with limited greenfield development opportunities, over the last ten years, residential growth in Darebin has predominantly been accommodated in two ways:

- New high-density development focused in and around activity centres, most prominently in Preston South and parts of High Street in Northcote and Thornbury activity centres.
- A significant amount of dispersed medium density development in established areas, particularly in Reservoir.

The demand for high-density and medium density housing will only increase as the population grows. It is important that this development is servicing the community in the most accessible locations.

Where housing growth is located is one of the main influences that planning has on residential development. The location of housing has significant implications for how our city functions and operates. It impacts on service provision and people's quality of access to public and active transport, open space, and employment opportunities. In turn this has implications on energy use and climate change, social cohesion, and community health and wellbeing.

It is important that housing growth is managed in a sustainable way by seeking to encourage it in appropriate locations and providing infrastructure and services to support the health and wellbeing of the community as it grows.

5.1 Residential Development Framework

OUTCOME 1

Housing growth is directed into the most accessible locations close to services, facilities, and infrastructure to sustainably meet the demands of Darebin's growing population.

The Residential Development Framework (RDF) sets the policy framework for directing housing growth and development across the municipality. It balances a range of considerations to ensure suitable locations are identified to accommodate housing growth in a prioritised way. In essence, it is a framework for managing change.

The RDF will inform updates to the Darebin Planning Scheme by replacing the Strategic Housing Framework Plan (Clause 02.04-2) and provide a basis for residential zone changes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 1.1

Residential development will be directed across the municipality based on a hierarchy of four levels of housing change defined by the Residential Development Framework (RDF) Plan.

The RDF has been informed by a set of overarching objectives:

- Ensure residential land can accommodate at least 15 years population growth.
- Focus and prioritise most housing growth in walkable catchments of activity centres and public transport.
- Integrate housing growth and neighbourhood character considerations to determine preferred development outcomes.
- Consider physical characteristics of land such as its capacity to accommodate development, environmental, and landscape values.
- Avoid excessive housing growth in locations with physical constraints or special characteristics.
- Ensure a diverse range of housing typologies can be accommodated that respond to the community's housing needs.

The RDF is based on a hierarchy of four levels of housing change to guide future growth and development. Each housing change area is based on a set of locational criteria and preferred housing outcomes. The housing change areas are summarised in the below table and defined over the following pages.

Implementation options are provided after each housing change area description to assist with translating the RDF into the Darebin Planning Scheme. The RDF works in tandem with the Neighbourhood Character Analysis outlined in later sections of this strategy to set preferred development outcomes for different areas across the municipality.

Notably, the RDF uses an additional housing change category compared to the Housing Framework Plan of the previous Darebin Housing Strategy. This is to address the need for a greater level of variation across the established residential areas of the municipality and the desire to direct housing growth into more accessible locations.

Residential Development Framework – Housing Change Areas

Minimal Change Areas

Minimal Change areas are locations containing special characteristics (e.g. Heritage Overlays) or physical constraints that limit the amount of change that can comfortably be accommodated.

The lowest level of relative housing change is expected in Minimal Change areas. Development will maintain the existing character of the area.

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Single dwellings, dual occupancies, and multi-unit development (on larger sites).

BUILDING HEIGHTS

Up to 2 storeys.

LIKELY RESIDENTIAL ZONE:
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ)

Incremental Change Areas

Incremental Change areas are typically established suburban locations away from activity centres and public transport. They have poorer walkable access to daily needs than Increased Change areas and will therefore support the second lowest level of change within the municipality.

Housing growth will occur in these locations in the context of the preferred character of the area.

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Multi-unit, townhouse and dual occupancy development.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

Up to 2 storeys (with some 3 storeys).

LIKELY RESIDENTIAL ZONE:
Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) and some General Residential Zone (GRZ)

Increased Change Areas

Increased Change areas are established residential areas that are within a reasonable walking catchment of activity centres and public transport. These positive attributes mean they are able to accommodate an increased level of change.

Housing growth will occur in these locations in the context of the preferred character of the area.

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Apartment and townhouse development

BUILDING HEIGHTS

Up to 3 storeys.

LIKELY RESIDENTIAL ZONE:
General Residential Zone (GRZ) or Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)

Substantial Change Areas

Substantial Change areas are within or adjoining activity centres or along major public transport corridors. They are residential areas with the greatest level of walkable access to services and public transport. They also contain physical characteristics that make them suitable for more substantial change.

The scale and form of change will vary depending on the context. These areas are likely to result in a new built form character for the area. It is therefore highly important that detailed built form controls are prepared to guide this change.

HOUSING TYPOLOGIES

Apartment and some townhouse development.

BUILDING HEIGHTS

3 to 6 storeys (residential areas) depending on the context.

3 to 10+ storeys (commercial areas) depending on the size, role, and function of the activity centre.

LIKELY RESIDENTIAL ZONE:
Residential Growth Zone (RGZ), Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ), or Mixed Use Zone (MUZ).

Residential Development Framework – Housing Change Areas Criteria

		Minimal Change	Incremental Change	Increased Change	Substantial Change	Substantial Change (commercial)
Activity Centre Proximity	Major Activity Centre (MAC)	N/A	>800m	<800m	<400m	Within AC
	Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre (LNAC)	<400m	>400m	<400m	<200m (LNAC)	
	Neighbourhood Activity Centre (NAC)		>200m	<200m	<100m (NAC)	
Public Transport Proximity	Train station	N/A	>800m (near AC) >400m (not in AC)	<800m (near AC) <400m (not in AC)	<400m (near AC) <200m (not in AC)	Not applicable
	Tram/bus stop 'hub'		>400m	<400m	<200m	
	Tram corridor		>200m	<200m	Land adjoining	
	Bus route (main)		>Land adjoining	Land adjoining	N/A	
Lot sizes/widths		N/A	N/A	N/A	Streetscape mostly consists of lots: >500sqm >12m frontage	
Existing character consistency		Highly consistent	Mixed	Mixed	Mixed or Evolving.	
Preferred housing typology		Single dwellings and dual occupancies	Townhouses and dual occupancies	Apartments and townhouses	Apartments and some townhouses	Apartments
Preferred building heights (storeys)		Up to 2	2 to 3	Up to 3	3 to 6	Guided by built form controls
Potential planning controls		NRZ HO or NCO may apply. Neighbourhood Character Policy applies.	NRZ or GRZ Neighbourhood Character Policy applies.	GRZ or HCTZ Neighbourhood Character Policy applies.	RGZ, HCTZ, or MUZ DDO will likely also apply.	C1Z or ACZ DDO may also apply.

ACRONYMS

MAC: Major Activity Centre

LNAC: Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre

NAC: Neighbourhood Activity Centre

AC: Activity Centre (all sizes)

NRZ: Neighbourhood Residential Zone

GRZ: General Residential Zone

RGZ: Residential Growth Zone

HCTZ: Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ)

MUZ: Mixed Use Zone

C1Z: Commercial 1 Zone

ACZ: Activity Centre Zone

HO: Heritage Overlay

DDO: Design and Development Overlay

NCO: Neighbourhood Character Overlay

Previous Housing Framework Plan

The previous Housing Framework Plan has served its purpose over the lifespan of Darebin's previous housing strategy. The framework was based on three levels of change, generally tied to the three levels of residential zones. This informed the implementation of Darebin's current residential zoning regime.

There is currently limited variation across the residential zoning framework in Darebin. A large percentage of the municipality is located within the General Residential Zone (GRZ). The application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) is largely restricted to Northcote and sections of Fairfield, Thornbury, and Preston where there are significant heritage precincts.

While limited residential zone variations is not in and of itself a negative, it does not effectively direct growth where it is most accessible nor reflect the differences of neighbourhoods across the municipality. The findings of the Darebin Housing Demand and Supply Analysis highlights the need to consider a more nuanced approach to residential zones across the municipality. The current largely one-size-fits all approach has resulted in dispersed rather than concentrated development in our established suburbs. It suggests, amongst other things, the wider use of the NRZ.

The most recent review of the Darebin's residential zones occurred as part of Amendment C144 and the proposed Amendment C152 to the Darebin Planning Scheme. Both amendments sought to increase the variation of zoning across the municipality. Most notably by proposing significantly more NRZ land (38.8%). However, Amendment C152 was not successful in achieving that amount of NRZ, largely due to the state thresholds established at the time for applying the NRZ.

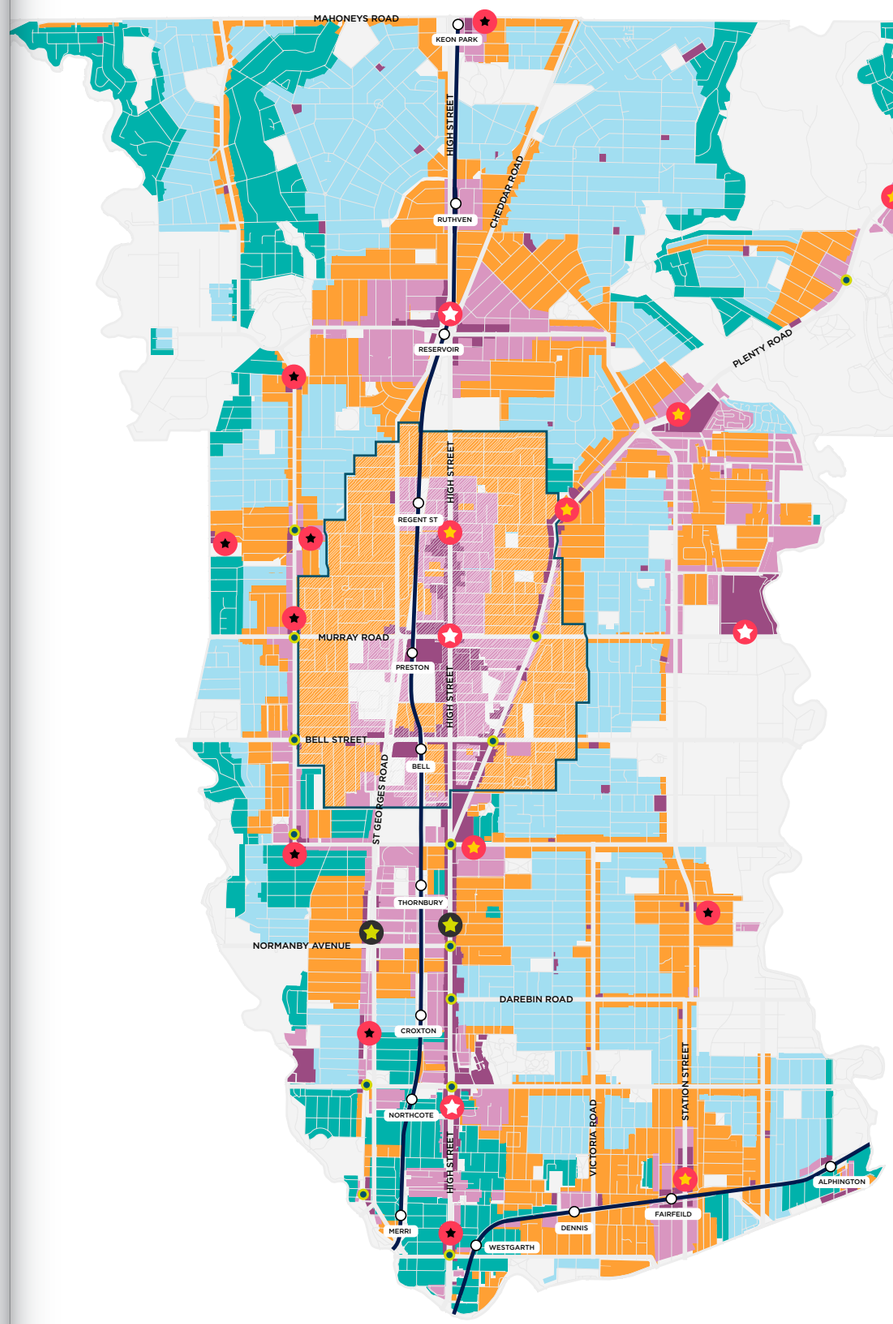
Since that time, a range of relevant changes have been made to the state standard residential zones. This includes:

- The removal of the two dwelling density cap in the NRZ.
- The introduction of mandatory building heights in the NRZ and GRZ.
- The introduction of a minimum mandatory garden area requirement in the NRZ and GRZ.
- Changes to the purpose of the residential zones. Most notably, the removal of purpose in the NRZ to '*limit opportunities for increased residential development*' and references to 'moderate housing growth' in the GRZ in favour of more general 'housing growth'.
- The ability to include neighbourhood character objectives (NRZ and GRZ) or design objectives (RGZ) in the schedule to the zone.

Most significantly, the NRZ is a less restrictive zone since C144 and more widely used across Victoria in recognition of the predominant two storey scale within many suburban locations.

Within this context, it is considered timely to revisit the issues raised as part of amendments C144 and C152. In particular, the need for greater variation in the residential zones to better direct housing growth in the right locations as guided by a new RDF.

Proposed Residential Development Framework



Housing Change Areas

- Minimal Change Areas
- Incremental Change Areas
- Increased Change Areas
- Substantial Change Areas (residential)
- Substantial Change Areas (commercial)

Activity Centre Programs

- Increased Change Areas (Activity Centre: Outer Catchment)*
- Substantial Change Areas (Activity Centre: Inner Catchment)*
- Activity Centre Core*
- Plan for Victoria identified Activity Centre*
- Preston (High Street) Activity Centre Boundary

Activity Centres and Transport Nodes

- Train Station
- Transport Hub
- Major Activity Centre
- Large Neighbourhood Activity Centre
- Neighbourhood Activity Centre

MINIMAL CHANGE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

- To recognise locations within the municipality that contain special characteristics or physical constraints that limit the capacity for housing growth and change.
- To ensure development maintains and protects existing valued characteristics as identified in the preferred character statements or heritage overlays.
- To support development that consists of single dwellings on a lot of one to two storeys and some limited dual occupancy and townhouse development on larger sites.

Minimal Change areas are locations containing special characteristics or physical constraints that limit the amount of change that can comfortably be accommodated.

Locations with special characteristics are distinguishable from other areas of the municipality. They are either included or recommended for inclusion within one or more of the following precinct-level (rather than site specific) overlays:

- Heritage Overlay (HO)
- Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO)
- Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO)
- Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO)

The existence of one of these overlays does not necessarily mean a property is designated for minimal change. The characteristics protected by the overlay should be special enough to warrant limited housing change, with any level of change greater than this likely to impact on these qualities.

Locations with physical constraints warranting a minimal change designation may relate to environmental factors (e.g. natural hazards such as severe flooding) or nearby land uses with potential offensive offsite amenity impacts. Unacceptable levels of change in these locations could exacerbate these amenity impacts.

The lowest level of housing change is expected in Minimal Change areas. In these locations, incremental levels of change or greater are considered inappropriate due to the identified physical constraints or the consequences for identified special characteristics.

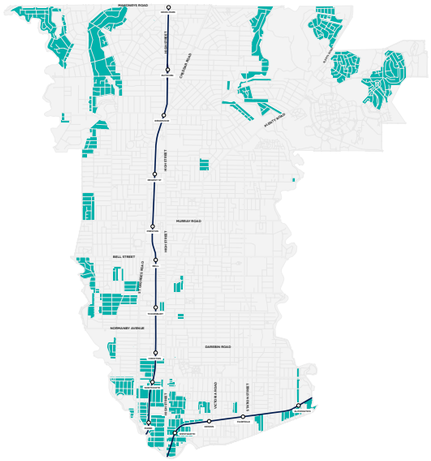
The majority of Minimal Change areas identified on the RDF are places located within a heritage overlay. Some locations, such as land within 200m of creek corridors, have been identified for further investigation for additional planning controls (e.g. Significant Landscape Overlay [SLO]) to ensure the special characteristics of these areas are adequately protected.

Development within Minimal Change areas will maintain the existing character of the area. This typically consists of single dwellings on a lot of one to two storeys. Larger sites may accommodate small infill development such as dual occupancy or townhouse development provided the special characteristics of the area are maintained.

IMPLEMENTATION

Minimal Change areas will be supported by planning policies and controls that will typically consist of:

- The application of the Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ).
- Preferred character statements reflected in residential zone schedule objectives.
- Residential zone schedule changes, where possible, to assist with ensuring development maintains the existing character.
- The retention or application of new special overlays (e.g. Heritage Overlays or Neighbourhood Character Overlays).



MINIMAL CHANGE AREAS

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INCREMENTAL CHANGE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

> To support a modest level of housing growth and change in established residential areas outside a walkable catchment of activity centres and public transport.

> To support a mixed variety of housing such as townhouse, dual occupancy, and detached dwellings up to a height of two storeys that responds to the preferred character of the area.

Incremental Change areas are typically established suburban locations away from activity centres and public transport. They have poorer walkable access to daily needs than Increased Change areas and are more reliant on motor vehicles for transport. Due to this they will support the second lowest level of change within the municipality.

Housing growth will occur in these locations in the context of the preferred character of the area. Generally, this will mean townhouse and dual occupancy development up to two to three storeys in height. The character will incrementally become more mixed but ultimately responds to the scale, form, and siting of existing development as guided by the preferred character statement.

The Incremental Change designation applies to the highest portion of residential land in Darebin.

IMPLEMENTATION

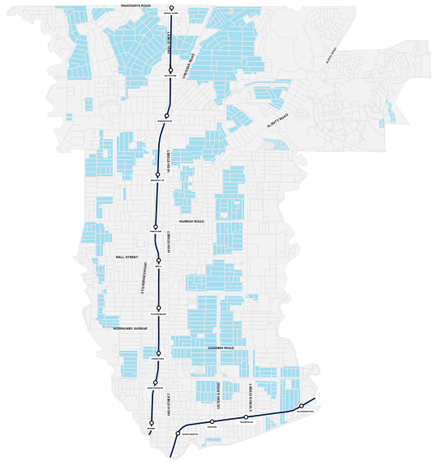
Incremental Change areas will be supported by planning policies and controls that will typically consist of:

> The application of the:

- Neighbourhood Residential Zone (NRZ) where two storeys is the dominant character and this is to be maintained.
- The General Residential Zone (GRZ) where three storeys is either the dominant character or emerging character, or where the existing subdivision pattern means three storey development can be achieved without unreasonable amenity or character impacts.

> Preferred character statements reflected in residential zone schedule objectives.

> Residential zone schedule changes, where possible, to assist with ensuring development responds to the valued character.



INCREMENTAL CHANGE AREAS

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INCREASED CHANGE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage an increased level of housing growth and change in established residential areas proximate to activity centres and public transport.
- To support a mixed variety of housing such as apartment and townhouse development in a way that responds to the preferred character of the area.

Increased Change areas are established residential areas that are within a reasonable walking catchment of activity centres and public transport. They are similar in character to Incremental Change areas however due to this proximity, they have positive attributes to accommodate an increased level of change.

The locations do not generally contain overlays or physical attributes that may impact on their capacity for change. Some locations that meet the walkable catchment criteria have been designated Incremental Change rather than Significant Change (e.g. land near Croxton and Alphington Stations). This is because previous strategic work has identified these locations for potential Neighbourhood Character Overlays (NCO) due to their highly consistent character. In the absence of such an overlay, an Incremental Change designation is warranted.

Housing growth will occur in Increased Change areas in the context of the preferred character of the area. Generally, this will entail apartment and townhouse development up to three storeys in height. The character will become more mixed but ultimately respond to the form and siting of existing development.

INCREASED CHANGE AREAS (ACTIVITY CENTRE OUTER CATCHMENT)

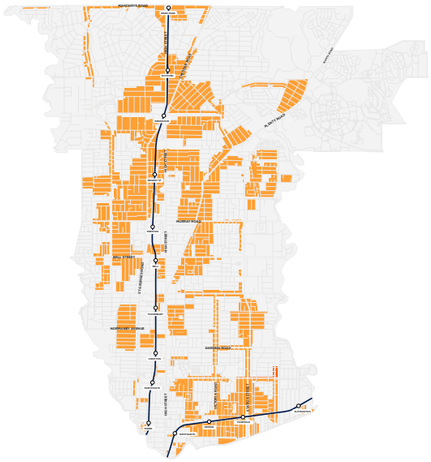
Increased Change areas (Activity Centre: Outer Catchment) are established residential areas that are within the 'outer catchment' of an activity centre identified in the State Government's Activity Centres Program (e.g. Preston (High Street)).

These areas are subject to new planning controls implemented by the State Government and are identified in the Darebin Planning Scheme as Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ2).

IMPLEMENTATION

Incremental Change areas will be supported by planning policies and controls that will typically consist of:

- The application of the General Residential Zone (GRZ).
- Preferred character statements reflected in residential zone schedule objectives.
- Residential zone schedule changes, where possible, to assist with ensuring increased levels of development can be accommodated in a way that responds to the valued character.



INCREASED CHANGE AREAS

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SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE AREAS

OBJECTIVES

> To encourage a high level of housing growth and change at increased densities to take advantage of residential areas that are highly accessible to public transport and the services provided by activity centres and urban renewal areas.

> To encourage housing diversity in the form of apartment development and some townhouse development.

> To promote a new built form character that is contextually appropriate and generally ranging in height from 3 to 6 storeys.

> To manage development through detailed built form planning controls.

Substantial Change areas are residential areas within or adjoining activity centres or along major public transport corridors. They are typically residential areas with the greatest level of walkable access to services and public transport. As such, they can accommodate the greatest level of residential change.

Substantial Change areas also contain advantageous physical characteristics that make them suitable for higher levels of change. This includes locations where there is either one or more of the following attributes:

- Lot sizes are larger, typically over 500sqm and lot widths are wider, typically over 12m.
- The character is mixed or evolving. There are examples of recent medium density development and/or there is a lower level of consistency of dwellings from the similar architectural era.
- Generally, no precinct-level overlays apply that would limit the ability to appropriately accommodate substantial change such as a Heritage Overlay (HO) or Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO).

Existing RGZ and MUZ land as well as residential land within Structure Plan boundaries are also defined as Substantial Change areas.

Substantial Change areas include locations identified for strategic redevelopment such as urban renewal areas (e.g. Oakover Village). These locations have the potential to provide housing at greater densities than the surrounding context due to their size or location.

The scale and form of Substantial Change areas will vary depending on the context. For instance, the built form character of Substantial Change areas adjoining the Preston Central Major Activity Centre will be different compared to that adjoining the Regent Village Shopping Centre NAC, which would be less intensive. All Substantial Change areas will however be more intensive than the surrounding Increased Change areas. Housing typologies will typically range in height from 3 to 6 storeys, depending on the context.

Substantial Change areas are not subject to neighbourhood character policy. Rather, the built form requirements will be set through separate built form controls outlined within a DDO or residential zone schedule.

Substantial Change areas are likely to result in a new built form character for the area. It is therefore important that detailed built form controls are prepared to guide this change.

IMPLEMENTATION

Substantial Change areas will be supported by planning policies and controls that will typically consist of:

> The application of the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ), Housing Choice and Transport (HCTZ), or Mixed Use Zone (MUZ). The GRZ may be used in circumstances where three storey development is more appropriate.

> Variations to residential zone schedules and the application of Design and Development Overlays (DDO) to manage built form outcomes consistent with further strategic work such as Built Form Frameworks, Urban Design Frameworks, or Structure Plans.

> The removal of Garden Area requirements.

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SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE AREAS (ACTIVITY CENTRE INNER CATCHMENT)

Substantial Change areas (Activity Centre: Inner Catchment) are established residential areas that are within the 'inner catchment' of an activity centre identified in the State Government's Activity Centres Program (e.g. Preston (High Street)).

These areas are subject to new planning controls implemented by the State Government and are identified in the Darebin Planning Scheme as Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ1).

Substantial Change areas (Activity Centre: Inner Catchment) are likely to result in a new built form character greater than that in Increased Change areas (Activity Centre Outer Catchment). The HCTZ1 has a maximum building height of up to 6 storeys on larger sites.

SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE AREAS (COMMERCIAL)

OBJECTIVES

- To encourage a significant level of housing growth and change at high densities as part of mixed-use development on commercial land within activity centres.
- To support housing diversity through development typologies that include a range of apartment sizes and configurations.
- To support contextually responsive development that is appropriate for the size and role of the activity centre.

Substantial Change (Commercial) areas relate to commercial land within activity centres that have been identified for residential development above commercial uses. It includes land within the Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), Priority Development Zone (PDZ), and Activity Centre Zone (ACZ) where residential uses are permitted.

The development of housing in activity centres helps support their viability and contributes to their vibrancy.

These locations will accommodate the highest level of change and will take a large portion of our housing supply. The amount of housing and extent of change will vary depending on the size and function of the activity centre.

Structure planning and activity centre planning will determine the capacity of activity centres to accommodate growth and set built form controls to guide development.

ACTIVITY CENTRE PROGRAM

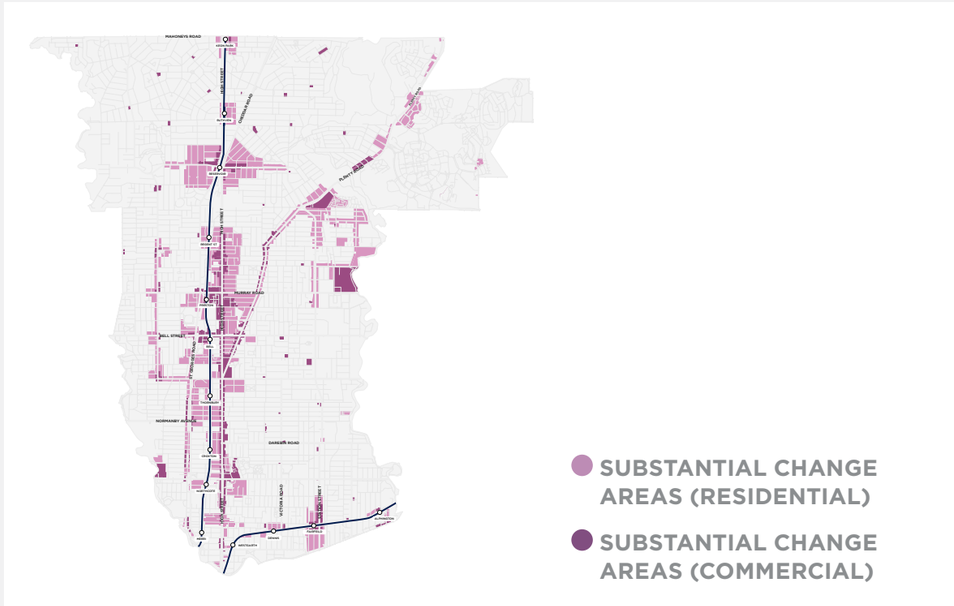
The State Government is leading the planning for activity centres identified through it's Activity Centre Program. The program invovles the preparation of activity centre plans and the application of the Built Form Overlay (BFO) to the main 'core' of the centre to guide development outcomes.

New planning controls have already been implemented in Preston (High Street) and two additional centres are currently being planned for: High Street (Thornbury) and St Georges Road (Thornbury).

IMPLEMENTATION

Substantial Change (Commercial) areas will be supported by planning policies and controls that will typically consist of:

- The application of Commercial 1 Zone (C1Z), Activity Centre Zone (ACZ), or other suitable control for commercial areas.
- The preparation of structure plans, Urban Design Frameworks, or other built form studies to inform appropriate additional planning controls such as Design and Development Overlays (DDO) and Built Form Overlays (BFO).



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ACTIONS	
1	Update the Darebin Planning Scheme to: • Replace the Housing Framework Plan in the Municipal Planning Strategy with the Residential Development Framework (RDF). • Update the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) with content from the Housing Strategy. • Update existing and introduce new residential zone schedules for Minimal, Incremental, and Increased Change areas. • Introduce new planning controls (i.e. a combination of zones and overlays to guide built form outcomes) for Substantial Change (residential) areas. • Include the Housing Strategy as a Background Document.
2	Along with Action 1, prepare built form and design controls for Substantial Change (residential) areas to help guide quality development outcomes. This should also include a review of existing planning controls (e.g. Design and Development Overlays) that apply to existing Substantial Change (residential)/Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) areas.
3	Prepare a new structure plan for the Northcote Major Activity Centre. As part of this, investigate the potential of surrounding heritage areas to accommodate greater levels of housing growth without impacting on heritage values.
4	Prepare an update to the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy to, amongst other things: • Identify potential urban renewal sites or precincts for mixed use development on underperforming locally significant industrial land where it can be demonstrated this land is no longer required for industrial purposes. • Help define a new activity centre hierarchy for the municipality that identifies the role and function of each centre.

5.2 Infrastructure, Services, & Transport

OUTCOME 2

Infrastructure and services are planned for and delivered in response to the changing needs of the growing community.

A growing population places increased pressure on existing services and infrastructure. New and upgraded infrastructure and services should therefore be planned for and provided in tandem with new development. If managed correctly, population growth and new development can be leveraged upon to support the provision of new or upgraded services and infrastructure.

Council plays an active role in planning for and managing important infrastructure and services across the municipality through its many strategies and capital works program.

This includes:

- Development infrastructure including roads, drains, footpaths, and shared paths and advocacy for public transport connections and upgrades.
- Parks and open space including recreational facilities and reserves.
- Community facilities and services such as kindergartens, libraries, maternal child health, and age care services.

The State Government is responsible for providing new major infrastructure in Darebin, including public transport, schools and hospitals.

The Housing Strategy is an important document to highlight where growth will be directed so that infrastructure and service needs can be identified and planned for in a coordinated way.

The established nature of Darebin means that available vacant land to construct new open spaces and community infrastructure and provide services is scarce. As Darebin grows and becomes denser, we will need to be more efficient with what we have and develop new ways to fund and deliver infrastructure.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.1

Monitor housing growth and plan for and deliver development infrastructure, community infrastructure, and open space.

Council will continue to monitor population growth and plan for infrastructure and open space through our various strategies and capital works programs. Focus will be placed on locations where there are existing gaps in the level of provision.

Council is currently reviewing the demand for and gaps in community infrastructure provision across the municipality to inform an investment plan. Our open space strategy (Breathing Space) is also nearing the end of its lifespan and due for an update.

In addition to other work, Council will continue to advocate to other levels of government for the provision of infrastructure, such as public transport upgrades and improvements across the municipality.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.2

Leverage off population growth and seek contributions from new development to help fund identified development, community, and open space infrastructure.

The planning system itself can be used to assist with funding infrastructure by levying new development for contributions towards planned infrastructure. Two main mechanisms in the planning scheme include the Development Contribution Plan Overlays (DCPO) and the Open Space Levy at Clause 53.01. A higher open space levy and public benefit uplift contribution provisions can also be included in the new Built Form Overlay (BFO), which can be used in higher growth activity centres.

In 2023 the City of Darebin introduced a municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO) to help fund Council's capital works program. Council is also seeking to increase the public open space contribution that is required to be paid when land is subdivided (Clause 53.01. These mechanisms will ensure Council has important revenue streams to draw from to ensure the community is provided with much needed infrastructure as Darebin continues to grow.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.3

Ensure new development is supported by public realm upgrades that improve pedestrian and active transport networks.

As the city becomes denser, supporting behaviour change towards sustainable modes of transport becomes even more important. Constructing wider and new roads is increasingly difficult in established areas. A focus should be on upgrading our civic realm and street networks to support active and public transport, that can efficiently support denser populations to move around and reduce car dependent travel.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.4

Consider reduced car parking rates for new development in locations close to public transport and activity centres.

The State-standard car parking rates in the VPPs are largely out-of-date. They provide limited support for sustainable and active modes of transport. Private car parking can further encourage the use of private car ownership/use. New forms of residential development that provide fewer car parking spaces and greater sustainable transport facilities, provide a real opportunity to decouple car ownership from housing. This is particularly relevant for locations with high public transport accessibility and well-managed on-street parking.

Residents should be provided with the opportunity to purchase or rent a dwelling that does not include private car parking in a highly accessible location if this suits their lifestyle. Council should consider local variations to state-standard car parking provisions in these locations. This does however need to be appropriately managed in a way that considers the local transport network and on-street car parking implications. Successful implementation of parking rate changes requires a robust on-street parking permit policy, to reduce congestion and demand for on-street car parking. Council recently updated their Parking Permit Policy (2023). Key objectives of which are to minimise the on-street car parking impact of new development and encourage greater consideration of sustainable transport modes.

Changes to parking rates should be informed by the change areas of the RDF. It should consider:

- **Substantial Change Areas:** provision of car parking below the statutory rates is expected. Given these areas have the greatest level of walkable access to services and public transport, provision of car parking below ABS car ownership rates would be considered. Parking Overlays should also be considered in these areas to convert car parking from being minimums to maximums.
- **Increased Change Areas:** car parking reductions would be supported in these areas, and the expectation is that residential parking is closely aligned to ABS car ownership data.
- **Incremental Change Areas:** generally, car parking would be expected to be provided at the parking rates outlined in the Planning Scheme. Any parking reductions would need to be fully justified via the submission of a car park demand assessment, noting the potential impact on on-street car park and limited walking accessibility and access to public transport.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2.5

Ensure Council services, infrastructure, and facilities support community resilience and adaptation to climate change impacts.

As our population grows over coming years, the impacts of climate change will increase too. The infrastructure and services that are provided to support this growth should help to address climate change risks and strengthen the community's capacity to respond and adapt to climate change events such as floods, heat waves, and droughts. This is important for underwriting the liveability of our neighbourhoods and the safety of residents and housing.

When designing and providing new Infrastructure and services, consideration should be given to:

- Designing all new Council facilities with climate risk and resilience at the forefront of decision-making.
- Incorporating Integrated Water Management principles into the design of Council facilities.
- Increasing the amount of green space and urban forest on public land and the range of accessible public cool and green open space throughout our neighbourhoods to provide refuge during climate events.
- Designing upgrades and changes to floodway systems with a climate change lens.
- Reducing the maintenance requirements of open space during drought events.
- Reducing public health risks by improving local emergency response services and ensuring residents have appropriate access to places of refuge.

ACTIONS	
5	Identify key indicators (approvals and construction rates) for monitoring residential development and where it is occurring across the municipality. Establish linkages between planning permits, building permits, and occupancy permits systems and the GIS database at Council to help establish a better system for monitoring residential development, housing trends, and infrastructure requirements across the municipality.
6	Review the municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO) and update as required in accordance with population growth and identified infrastructure needs.
7	Continue work on amending the planning scheme at Clause 53.01 to increase the public open space contribution when land is subdivided. At the same time, advocate to State government for reforms to the *Subdivision Act 1988* and Clause 53.01 of the planning scheme that enable the ability to seek open space contributions from build-to-rent development and other models that do not currently trigger a contribution.
8	Continue gathering data on the demand and need for, and undertake a review and gather usage data on, community infrastructure in the municipality to help identify gaps in community infrastructure provision to inform an investment plan.
9	Consider the implications of the Residential Development Framework (RDF) when reviewing and updating the Darebin Transport Strategy.
10	Explore options for setting different car parking and bicycle parking requirements for new development in appropriate locations close to public transport and activity centres that help facilitate behaviour shifts to more sustainable modes of transport.
11	Advocate to State government for additional and improved public transport services and connections, and greater investment in active transport, across Darebin as outlined within Darebin's Transport Strategy, especially in areas poorly serviced by public transport.

ACTIONS	
12	Implement the actions of Darebin's Climate Emergency Plan related to Community Resilience to ensure Council buildings, infrastructure, and facilities are climate resilient and support the safety of Darebin's growing community.

6.0 Housing Need

It is important that new housing in Darebin reflects the needs of our diverse community to ensure the municipality remains a welcoming place for all.

The housing stock in Darebin currently consists mainly of detached dwellings. As an established municipality with limited potential to provide for new detached housing, the demand for housing will continue to be met through infill development.

The projected demand for 28,700 new dwellings will therefore be in the form of medium density housing (townhouses and units) followed by high density housing (apartments). It is important that this new housing reflects the needs of the community.

Housing policy should encourage new housing to reflect the preferences of current and future demographics in terms of typology, size, cost, design, and location.

6.1 Housing Diversity

OUTCOME 3

Housing diversity is increased in response to the community's equally diverse needs and provide housing choice & affordability close to jobs and services.

Compared to other similar municipalities, the City of Darebin has a relatively diverse housing stock. This has been underpinned by a significant increase in medium and high density housing over the last 10 years. This diversity is a strength that should be reinforced and enhanced over coming years.

Housing diversity is important for ensuring that Darebin remains a welcoming place that can house people of all ages, backgrounds, genders, and abilities. Planning policy and controls have varying levels of influence over housing diversity. The key determinants of housing diversity relate to the type, size, cost, design, tenure, and location of housing.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.1

Prioritise the development of a diverse range of medium and high-density housing in accessible locations as guided by the Residential Development Framework.

The Residential Development Framework (RDF) is the main planning policy tool that can be used to facilitate a diverse range of housing types across the municipality. The four change areas identified in the RDF are linked to different housing outcomes. This will help to ensure the right type of housing is provided in the right locations.

The RDF is seeking to focus most medium density and all high-density development in the most accessible locations of the municipality. It is important that this new development provides a diverse range of housing choices to accommodate Darebin's diverse community.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.2

Encourage the development of a diverse range of housing in accessible locations that offers increased housing choice (in terms of type, size, and tenure) and affordability.

Access to housing that is affordable and secure is fundamental to community wellbeing. Worsening housing affordability and an increasing proportion of residents in housing stress, has significant implications for the Darebin community and economy, resulting in:

- Greater levels of housing stress leading to increased pressure on the demand for social housing and increased risks of homelessness.
- Decreased home ownership amongst young people and increased reliance on the financial support of families to enter the housing market.
- Increased reliance on the private rental market, which offers a less secure housing tenure in the long term.
- Reduced levels of disposable income as a greater portion of income is spent on housing.
- Increased populations living on lower incomes in more affordable but less accessible parts of the city leading to key worker shortages and greater levels of spending on transport to

Affordable Housing

Affordable housing is different to housing affordability. It is defined at Section 3AA of the *Planning and Environment Act 1987* as:

...affordable housing is housing, including social housing, that is appropriate for the housing needs of any of the following—

(a very low income households;

(b) low income households;

(c) moderate income households.

Whereas housing affordability affects all residents and relates to the general cost of housing relative to household incomes, affordable housing is targeted at cohorts of the community that have very low, low, or moderate household incomes.

Affordable housing is an umbrella term. There are many ways in which it can be delivered and operated including as public housing and community housing to subsidised market housing.

Affordable housing is essential infrastructure to support a thriving and prosperous city. Part 3 of the Darebin Housing Strategy will address ways in which Council can influence affordable housing outcomes across all areas of Council. This may extend to:

- Partnerships with service providers, community housing providers, and other levels of government to facilitate outcomes.
- The lease and development of suitable Council-owned land for affordable housing.
- Expansion of research and advocacy actions on behalf of residents and service providers to other levels of government.
- Expanded opportunities to provide support to people in housing crisis.

Planning related avenues that will be explored through Part 3 of the Housing Strategy include:

- **Inclusionary housing policy:** defining a minimum affordable housing contribution expectation in planning policy to assist with negotiations through the planning approvals process and to ensure Council's expectations are known.
- **Concessions, incentives, and fast-tracked processes:** prioritising the approval of social and affordable housing through streamlined approvals processes, development concessions/ incentives, and officer capacity enhancements.
- **Fee & levy discounts:** reducing or waiving relevant planning fees and development levies for affordable housing projects.
- **Affordable housing design:** ensuring that affordable housing is of high design quality, indistinguishable from other forms of housing, and is suitable for people of all ages and abilities.

Council has limited control over the affordability of the private housing market. There are wide ranging factors that impact the property market including interest rates, financial markets, taxes, and tax concessions. One of the greatest influences that Council has on the property market is as the administrator of the local planning scheme. Council has significant influence over where housing is located, its form, and design.

Increasing the diversity of housing in accessible areas is one way planning can influence housing affordability. Ensuring there are more types of housing options available in various locations increases the supply for different cohorts of the community and limits pressure on house prices. Ensuring there are a suitable range of housing options catering for different cohorts of the population also means that a greater diversity of residents can live in accessible locations.

A significant amount of medium density development has occurred in Darebin over the last ten years. This has diversified Darebin's housing stock and increased choice and affordability. This type of housing has been important for enabling people, who cannot afford separate housing, to enter the housing market in Darebin who might otherwise move further out.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.3

Encourage a diversity of dwelling sizes in new development that reflects the needs of the community and ensures residents are not displaced.

The average household size in Darebin has historically been decreasing. Two key population cohorts in Darebin will continue the trend towards demand for smaller houses: younger people (20 to 35) and older people (75+). Sole person households and couple families without children have been growing and will continue to grow as a proportion of all households in Darebin. Two-bedroom dwellings are therefore likely to continue to be the dominant dwelling size of new housing.

Young families will however continue to be an important household group in coming years. As the cost of housing continues to rise, these households will increasingly be unable to afford to live in detached single dwellings. The proportion of group households in Darebin is also higher than the Melbourne average due to the large cohort of younger workers and students in the municipality. Without continued medium density development that includes dwellings of three or more bedrooms, larger households could potentially be priced out of the municipality for more affordable parts of Melbourne.

Planning should encourage new medium and high-density residential development to include a diverse range of dwelling sizes. To meet the housing needs of Darebin to 2041, population and household forecasts indicate dwellings sizes will likely need to be provided as follows.

No. bedrooms	Proportion of Dwelling Demand to 2041
0 - 1	15%
2	50%
3+	35%

New development should therefore respond to housing demand forecasts and include a mixture of:

- One and two bedroom options for the growing cohort of smaller households such as lone person and couple households.
- Three or more bedroom townhouses and larger apartments for larger households such as families and group households.

This should be achieved by encouraging a range of household types and sizes to align with the projected demand by:

- Setting dwelling size (no. of bedrooms) proportion targets in planning policy for all new development over a certain size (e.g. 10 dwellings)
- Ensuring any new planning controls for large urban renewal areas include appropriate mechanisms to support a diversity of housing types and sizes.
- Requiring housing diversity reports from development on urban renewal sites that demonstrate how the proposed range of housing responds to the needs of various household sizes.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.4

Support development that includes alternative tenure models that seek to reduce the cost of housing.

Planning should be responsive to development models that seek to deliver housing differently and in a way that reduces the cost of housing, such as through shared equity schemes. Unnecessary roadblocks should be minimised, and avenues should be explored that facilitate the delivery of this type of housing. Innovative models add much needed diversity to the housing market.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 3.5

Ensure the ongoing operating costs of dwellings for future residents are reduced.

Housing affordability is not just about the cost to buy or rent a house but also the ongoing operating costs. The energy used to heat and cool our homes and to run and operate the appliances we rely on is a significant contributor to the cost of living. As outlined in later sections of this strategy, new development should achieve best practice Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) outcomes to increase the thermal performance of houses, maximise energy efficiency, and reduce ongoing operating costs for future residents.

ACTIONS	
13	Review housing diversity policy in the Planning Policy Framework and update consistent with this Housing Strategy. Consider setting dwelling size targets in local policy for larger developments.

6.2 Accessible & Specialised Housing

OUTCOME 4

The proportion of housing that supports residents throughout the lifecycle and responds to specialised needs has been increased to ensure residents are not displaced.

Specialised Housing

Housing diversity relates to more than the size, cost, and type of housing. It also encompasses the need to provide specialised housing for specific groups. This includes aged care accommodation, supported accommodation for people living with a disability, and student accommodation.

Providing this type of housing is important for ensuring residents with specific requirements are not displaced. The Darebin Planning Scheme has dedicated planning policy that supports the provision of these types of specialised housing. This should be strengthened and enhanced.

Accessible Housing

Accessible housing refers to housing that caters to the needs of people with a disability or limited mobility. It is underpinned by universal design principles and is designed to ensure people can move around freely and undertake household activities with ease. Accessible housing ensures equitability, access and dignity for a diverse range of people in the community for the lifetime of a dwelling.

Accessible housing primarily aims to assist people with permanent or long term, limited mobility. In addition to these groups, accessible housing can assist older people to age in place, those with temporary injuries or families with young children. Accessible housing allows people with limited mobility to visit family and friends and be comfortable in their homes. Accessible housing works well for a person living with a disability as well as a person without a disability. Most housing being built in Victoria does not adequately meet the needs of people with limited mobility.

There is a need for more accessible housing in Darebin. The population of Darebin is ageing. In particular, the proportion of those aged 85 and over has increased significantly and will continue to increase over coming years. In 2020, there were 4,300 households across Darebin with people requiring assistance with core activities. As our community continues to grow and age this need is expected to increase to over 6,000 by 2036 (SGS, 2020).

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.1

Seek to ensure the design of new dwellings is accessible, adaptable, and functional to support residents throughout the life cycle and with limited mobility requirements.

Key aspects of accessible housing include:

- Step-free entrances, slopes of paths, and surface types.
- Wider doorways and internal corridors/hallways.
- Wider circulation spaces in rooms and the position of showers, toilets, sinks etc.
- The position of bedrooms and bathrooms in dwellings.
- Increased car parking sizes.

Accessible design requirements are variously controlled through the planning system, the National Construction Code (NCC), and Victorian Building Regulations (VBRs).

The Liveable Housing Design Guidelines (LHDG) was created in partnership between community, consumer groups, government and industry and is championed by Liveable Housing Australia (LHA). These guidelines are the current industry standard for adaptable housing delivery in Australia. The LHDG outline three levels of performance range from basic requirements (silver level) through to best practice (platinum level).

Currently, the Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs) include some accessible housing requirements for apartment developments at Clause 55 and 58. These standards seek to ensure 50% of apartments in new development comply with a range of requirements relating to door openings and design, path widths, circulation areas, showers, and toilets. However, these requirements only relate to apartment developments and do not capture other forms of medium density development such as townhouses.

The NCC and VBRs have recently been updated to include accessible design requirements based on the LHDG silver level standards. This includes elements of design related to:

- Step-free paths of travel into houses.
- Wider doorways and corridors.
- Circulation spaces in front of toilets.
- Step-free showers.
- Reinforced bathroom and toilet walls for grabrails.

Importantly these requirements extend to both Class 1a (houses, townhouses) and Class 2 (apartments) buildings. This is a step in the right direction.

Darebin will continue to work with residents and community groups to understand the changing needs of older people and those living with a mobility-related disability and determine ways to increase the proportion of dwellings in the municipality that go beyond the new NCC and Clause 55 standards.

This may include:

- Supporting the greater use of the Liveable Housing Design Guidelines by developers. This could include providing guidelines to applicants that address matters that go beyond the NCC.

- Determining appropriate ways to include accessible design requirements in local planning policy that is not covered by the new NCC 2022.
- Determining an appropriate proportion of dwellings within larger developments that should be constructed to gold or platinum design standards to meet the needs of residents with complex needs. This is particularly important for proposed social and affordable housing.
- Advocating to the Australian Building Codes Board, the Victorian Building Authority, State Government for continual improvements to accessible housing requirements in the NCC, VBRs, and VPPs.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.2

Facilitate the delivery of high-quality retirement housing, aged care and specialist disability housing in Substantial Change and Increased Change areas.

As Darebin's population continues to age, there will increasingly be a need for retirement housing and aged care facilities to ensure this age group can remain in the municipality as they move throughout the lifecycle. Equally important is specialist disability housing that supports the needs of residents living with a disability.

Housing policy should facilitate the provision of this type of housing in appropriate locations. Suitable housing in locations with public transport, services, and activity centres is vitally important for supporting the wellbeing of ageing residents and people living with a disability. Being able to easily move around the city determines levels of social and civic participation and inclusion and influences access to community and health services.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.3

Support flexible housing designs that provide for adaptable spaces that can evolve through the lifecycle and across multiple generations.

Multigenerational housing designs allow families to adapt their existing homes to their changing needs and requirements over the lifecycle. This could mean enabling a larger dwelling to be split into two or multiple dwellings so that more than one generation of the same family can live under the same roof. This can allow people to age in place more effectively, retain connections to community, and reduce costs associated with housing.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 4.4

Encourage the development of good quality student accommodation in Substantial and Increased Change locations close to tertiary education institutions and along public transport routes that provide connections to these institutes.

Darebin is home to a high proportion of higher education students. This is owing to the educational institutes of La Trobe University and Melbourne Polytechnic in the municipality. Ensuring the provision of affordable and good quality student accommodation within easy access of these institutions is vitally important for supporting these strategic assets and ensuring students are provided with stable and secure housing. Planning for the La Trobe NEIC should include mechanisms to deliver high quality student and worker housing.

ACTIONS	
14	Undertake a review of the building and planning systems following the accessible design changes to the Building Regulations and determine what measures are required to further accessible design in new residential development. This could include the preparation of guidelines to provide to planning permit applicants or a local policy that outlines Council's expectations with respect to accessible design.
15	Advocate to national and state government to increase accessible design requirements in the National Construction Code (NCC), Victorian Building Regulations (VBRs), and Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs).
16	Consider preparing a Student Accommodation Policy that can be implemented through Clause 16.01 of the Planning Policy Framework. The policy should set expectations in relation to the location of student accommodation, room layout, common areas, car parking, and bicycle storage.

Part 2: Character & Design

7.0 Housing Character

The residential character of our housing and streets contributes towards the liveability and identity of our neighbourhoods and how they look and feel.

In addition to amenity concerns, neighbourhood character considerations are often the most common factors raised through the development approval process. Accommodating residential development and change at the same time as responding to neighbourhood character is therefore a key challenge.

7.1 Neighbourhood Character

OUTCOME 5

New development responds to the valued characteristics of neighbourhoods in a way that balances housing change while supporting the identity and sense of place.

Neighbourhood character relates to both public and private realm features of an area that combine to contribute towards its distinctive character and sense of place. This can include features such as the scale and form of development, building design and materials, architectural era, topography, landscaping and trees, the extent of space surrounding development, and the subdivision and road layout. It is not just attractive features that constitute and contribute towards character but rather the cumulative effect and relationship between features that form the character of an area.

Council's current approach to managing neighbourhood character is informed by the Darebin Neighbourhood Character Study 2007, which is now over 15 years old. Since that time, significant development has occurred within the municipality and the study is no longer fit-for-purpose to respond to the contemporary housing challenges faced by Darebin.

Recently, the role of local neighbourhood character policies, statements, and guidance has been reduced in the planning approvals process due to the introduction of deemed-to-comply planning provisions (Clause 54 & 55).

A new approach to neighbourhood character has been prepared as part of this Housing Strategy that responds to these challenges (Appendix 1).

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5.1

Manage residential change in established neighbourhoods by encouraging development that is consistent with the Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements and Guidelines.

All parts of the municipality will need to accommodate a degree of change to respond to our housing needs. It is important that we have an approach in place that can allow for change in a way that respects the character of the different neighbourhoods across the municipality.

The Residential Development Framework (RDF) has been informed by an analysis of neighbourhood character. This character analysis in conjunction with the levels of change defined by the RDF has been used to inform Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines (Appendix 1). The purpose of the Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines is to manage in a way that respects neighbourhood character.

The Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines will apply to all Minimal, Incremental, and Increased Change areas. Where possible, aspects of the Statements and Guidelines will be implemented into the planning scheme through residential zone changes and planning policy updates.

The guidance provided by this document will also help Council decide on planning permit applications that do not comply with neighbourhood character standards in Clause 55 (the Townhouse and Low-rise Code) and will be used to inform negotiations with applicants.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 5.2

Ensure locations with special or highly consistent character attributes are identified and protected from inappropriate development.

There are some locations across the municipality that have been identified over the years as potential areas containing special or highly consistent character attributes. These locations are not included within a Heritage Overlay. This includes areas within Alphington and in northwest Reservoir in the Merrilands Estate. The highly consistent character of these locations has been noted as a unique feature of the municipality. This should be further investigated and the need for further planning protections explored (e.g. Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) and/or Minimal Change designation). Additional locations may be identified over time that warrant a Minimal Change designation due to special characteristics.

ACTIONS	
17	Amend the planning scheme to: • Introduce new residential zone schedules for Increased, Incremental, and Minimal change areas that implement aspects of the Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines in Appendix 1. • Amend the Planning Policy Framework with aspects of the Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines in Appendix 1 that cannot be addressed through the residential zone schedules.
18	Explore the need for a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) in areas of special neighbourhood character.

7.2 Landscape Character

OUTCOME 6

New development enhances the landscape qualities of our neighbourhoods and contributes towards the urban canopy within the municipality.

Development at higher densities in our neighbourhoods has the potential to result in increased hard surfacing and the loss of green space and canopy trees if not appropriately managed. This has implications for the urban heat island effect, the landscape character of our neighbourhoods, and biodiversity. A key value expressed by the Darebin community through consultation is the importance of greening and the desire for more trees as part of new development.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 6.1

Ensure new development provides space to accommodate landscaping, including canopy tree planting, to increase canopy coverage across the municipality and reduce the urban heat island effect, especially in areas of Darebin that experience higher heat island vulnerability.

The Preferred Neighbourhood Character Statements and Guidelines (Appendix 1) outline landscaping and tree planting desired expectations for the municipality. The Guidelines place an emphasis on maximising tree canopy cover and indigenous and native vegetation planting, particularly within 200m of creek corridors.

Recent changes to Clause 54 and 55 of planning schemes have introduced state-wide tree canopy coverage standards for new residential development. Local variations to these standards cannot be introduced by Councils through residential zone schedules.

ACTIONS	
19	Prepare Landscape Guidelines for the municipality and explore ways to, where possible, implement the landscaping guidance of the Preferred Character Statements & Guidelines in the Darebin Planning Scheme. Explore avenues to increase canopy coverage near waterways beyond state-standard tree canopy coverage provisions.
20	Prepare a new Urban Forest Strategy for the municipality that can consider, amongst other things, the greater use of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) and Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO).

8.0 Housing Design

The design and quality of housing have implications for community health and wellbeing and the built and natural environment.

These built form aspects of residential development contribute to the sense of place in our neighbourhoods, residential amenity and liveability, environmental sustainability, and climate resilience.

Aspects of design are controlled through various planning provisions and policies, building codes, and regulations. This section outlines a range of design-related strategic directions that seek to:

- Improve the design quality and residential amenity of housing in our neighbourhoods.
- Increase the environmental performance of residential development and resilience of our neighbourhoods to the impacts of climate change.

8.1 Design Excellence

OUTCOME 7

New development achieves design excellence, respects heritage, and supports the wellbeing of residents to maintain the liveability of our municipality.

Beyond neighbourhood character and heritage matters, there are other design considerations that affect the way development looks, feels, and functions. This includes urban design considerations that contribute towards the sense of place of our neighbourhoods and the internal and external layout of development that affects residential amenity as well as heritage considerations.

These aspects of design are variously managed by the planning scheme through state standard provisions and policies such as Clause 54, 55 and 57, the Better Apartment Design Standards (Clause 58), and other built form controls implemented by Council such as Design and Development Overlays (DDOs) and Heritage Overlays. Feedback from the Darebin community highlights the importance of well-designed development in our neighbourhoods.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.1

Facilitate lot consolidation and precinct-level development in existing residential neighbourhoods to improve the form and quality of higher density development.

The existing pattern of development in our neighbourhoods presents significant challenges for, and limitations to, achieving high quality infill development in established residential areas. Site-by-site infill development can result in suboptimal design outcomes that can impact design quality, residential amenity, and the type and form of development that can be achieved. Ultimately this is due to the limited size and dimensions of existing residential lots and the street block pattern, which is designed for cars. The issues posed by these challenges are the reasons for initiatives such as Greening the Greyfields Pilot Project (see below), which is seeking to promote infill development at a precinct-level.

The scope for an individual site to accommodate increased heights/storeys while maintaining internal amenity for residents, and not adversely impacting on neighbours (overshadowing, setbacks, overlooking, etc.) is influenced by the size of the lot. Council is currently seeing this challenge in parts of the municipality's residential areas that are located within the Residential Growth Zone (RGZ). In these locations, four storey development is not being achieved and less intensive standard townhouse development is being delivered, or poor-quality development is being delivered that relies heavily on privacy screening, poor outlooks, minimal space for landscaping, and dominant car parking structures.

Lot consolidation is therefore important for achieving well-designed higher density (above four storeys) housing. This is recognised in the Victorian Government's Future Homes program, with many of the Design Intent Plans

requiring at least two (if not more) lots to accommodate the design.

Achieving lot consolidation is not only important for improving design and amenity outcomes but also for supporting housing diversity. Larger lot sizes can accommodate different forms of housing. This includes, apartment developments, which are less viable under four storeys in height, and three storey townhouses, which are important for providing larger homes for families.

A program of strategic planning work is required to investigate ways in which lot consolidation and precinct-level redevelopment could be encouraged in appropriate locations of established residential areas.

Options to consider include but are not limited to:

- Preparing standard built form controls and planning mechanisms for Substantial Change areas that help to overcome feasibility issues with four or more storey development in established residential areas. In consultation with the community, these investigations should determine planning controls to deliver high-quality built form outcomes and help incentivise lot consolidation such as uplift incentives or concessions to improve the financial viability of lot consolidation.
- Preparing a framework for encouraging and supporting proponent-led rezoning requests where multiple lots will be consolidated as part of an integrated development. This should only be considered where it can be demonstrated that a more intensive outcome will result in a better design and housing outcome while not negatively impacting on the amenity of the surrounding residential context.
- Undertaking investigations into appropriate locations across the municipality where precinct-level development could be achieved and developing planning controls that are informed by the Greening the Greyfields pilot project.
- Advocating to state government for a State-standard approach to encouraging lot consolidation. The lot consolidation problem is not unique to Darebin. It is a problem for all of Victoria and requires a coordinated approach at both the local and state level. The new Housing Choice and Transport Zone (HCTZ) goes some way to incentivising lot consolidation.

GREENING THE GREYFIELDS

12 October 2009

25 April 2023

The level of change over the last 10 years within Darebin's established suburban areas has been significant. This is particularly the case for Reservoir where the majority of medium density townhouse development has occurred. The below aerial imagery comparing streets in Reservoir between 2009 and 2023 demonstrates the level of change experienced.

This type of development has played a significant and important role in underpinning the diversity of the housing stock in Darebin and has assisted with easing housing affordability pressures. It has however increased densities in suburban locations designed during the post-war era. This neighbourhood design was based on a different form of car-based development consisting of low density detached dwellings with large backyards.

These types of locations are referred to as 'greyfield' areas (as opposed to former farmland 'greenfields' and former industrial land 'brownfields') and typically consist of aging housing stock on large lower-priced lots representing good opportunities for redevelopment. Increasing densities in these locations in an ad hoc uncoordinated way can lead to suboptimal design and poor amenity outcomes for residents (limited open space, overlooking issues, and overshadowing impacts), limited opportunities for canopy tree planting, increased drainage issues through increased hard surfaces, and decreased walkability.

The Greening the Greyfields pilot project undertaken by Maroondah City Council and Swinburne University in partnership with Department of Transport and Planning is the first of its kind to implement planning controls that provide precinct-level strategic guidance for two greenfield locations in the municipality. It is based on precinct-approach rather than a lot-by-lot approach that encourages lot consolidation to accommodate medium density development in conjunction with urban greening. The project has introduced two new Development Plan Overlays (DPO) that incentivises lot consolidation through density and height benefits as well as other requirements to achieve urban renewal in these greyfield locations on a precinct-scale.

Opportunities to take a precinct-level approach to development should be considered by Darebin to increase residential amenity and design, landscaping and greening, improve drainage outcomes and the walkability of neighbourhoods, and provide opportunities for communal and public open space.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.2

Facilitate good design outcomes in new development by utilising Darebin's Good Design Guides and refer applicants to the guidelines so that the City of Darebin's design expectations are understood.

The design excellence program at Darebin will be continued (see below). Facilitating good design outcomes across the municipality is fundamental for enhancing the sense of place in our neighbourhoods and supporting the wellbeing of residents. Planning permit applicants will continue to be referred to the Darebin Good Design Guidelines. It is also important that any new built form controls and local policy developed for the municipality reflect the aspirations of these guidelines. This will ensure the best chances of achieving design excellence in new development.

Darebin Design Excellence Program

Since 2020, Darebin has been implementing a design excellence program. The purpose of the program is to improve the design quality of development in Darebin to create sustainable and liveable neighbourhoods.

The program is being implemented through four main initiatives:

- **Leadership:** Council created the Design Excellence program to develop and oversee improved design in private development through its own capital works projects.
- **Guidance:** Council is preparing good design guidelines to communicate design expectations for new development. To date guidelines for medium density development and apartment developments have been prepared. Future guidelines will focus on landscaping, streetscape design, and ESD.
- **Capacity Building:** training for internal staff on good design principles and to create a shared understanding of design.
- **Recognition:** setting up a good design awards to help create awareness and build design literacy.

The guidelines build on aspects addressed through the planning scheme related to the design of development. They address matters related to site design, public realm interfaces, movement and access, building layout, landscaping, building appearance and site services.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.3

Ensure residential development provides appropriate levels of internal and external amenity for current and future residents.

Well-designed housing has positive impacts on the wellbeing of its residents. Aspects of design influencing residential amenity that is managed through the planning system include overshadowing and overlooking from adjoining properties, daylight access, internal layout and room dimensions, the size of private open space, and noise impacts. These amenity considerations have become more important as new types of denser development have appeared in our neighbourhoods.

Residential amenity is predominantly addressed through Clause 55, 57 and 58 of the planning scheme.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.4

Ensure residential development design considers storage and collection of waste at the early planning stage, and the waste facilities provided in new development caters to the needs of current and future communities.

Increased population growth and resultant increased density of housing inevitably places higher strain on waste collection services. In particular, multi dwelling developments which use separate bins (up to four bins) per dwelling, place strain on kerbside waste collections and leads to congestion on the municipality's naturestrips and roads.

The location, design and nature (Council or private contractor) of waste collection and storage facilities is an often overlooked aspect of residential development design.

Clear guidance is required to ensure sufficient space is provided for bins to be stored that accommodates four waste streams – general waste, recycling, glass and FOGO (Food and Garden Organics). Shared bins should be encouraged for townhouse developments of 4 or more dwellings, and required for all apartment buildings. The proliferation of separate bins for each dwellings, which leads to congested naturestrips and challenges for Council bin collections, should be avoided.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.5

Ensure residential development responds appropriately to areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance and large developments are designed with respect for Country in mind.

Darebin is situated on the traditional lands and waters of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people and has traditionally been a significant area for them. Before European invasion, the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people lived here, at least periodically, as they farmed, hunted, and gathered on the land and carried out various cultural activities.

Residential land within 200m of the Darebin, Merri, and Edgars Creeks is located within Areas of Aboriginal Cultural Heritage Significance. Any significant development of this land requires the preparation of a Cultural Heritage Management Plan.

Development near waterways has the

potential to impact on the cultural significance of these locations if not sited and designed appropriately. The current controls along the creek corridors in Darebin do not provide sufficient guidance for new development to respond to the environmental, landscape, or cultural significance of these locations.

New planning controls, such as a Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) or Designed and Development Overlay (DDO) should be considered for the creek environs to embed cultural significance and appropriate design and built form requirements that respond to cultural heritage values. Large developments across the municipality, particularly in locations near areas of Aboriginal cultural heritage significance should consider and incorporate the views of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices notably the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung Cultural Heritage Aboriginal Corporation, to bring a deeper cultural connection between land (Country) and development.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 7.6

Ensure areas of heritage significance are identified and appropriately protected from inappropriate development.

Colonial development first appeared in Darebin from the 1830s. The land boom of the 1880s saw suburban development expand into Darebin. There are many significant heritage assets from this time and the decades following, including civic and commercial buildings, as well as a range of residential buildings and precincts. This is represented by the many Heritage Overlays that have been introduced in the planning scheme over time. Most of these overlays in our residential areas relate to the highly consistent Victorian, Edwardian, and Inter-war streets, most significantly in Northcote and Thornbury.

These Heritage Overlays, in addition to heritage policies, guide Council's discretion when considering development to ensure that the heritage values of the municipality are protected and enhanced. No changes are proposed to the Heritage Overlays or heritage policy as part of this strategy. Future actions however have been identified such as reviewing Darebin's current heritage policy and framework to ensure it meets best practice standards and ensures the municipality's heritage continues to be recognised and protected as it grows and changes.

ACTIONS	
21	Undertake a study that investigates mechanisms that seek to encourage lot consolidation and precinct-level redevelopment in existing residential neighbourhoods. This could include: • Identifying suitable 'greyfield' precincts within the municipality and determining appropriate planning mechanisms to encourage precinct-level residential development. • Determining built form and design controls that assist with overcoming feasibility issues with four storey and greater development in Substantial Change areas. These investigations should determine planning controls to deliver high-quality built form outcomes and help incentivise lot consolidation.
22	Advocate to State government for state-wide mechanisms and incentives to encourage lot consolidation through infill development.
23	Continue to implement the Darebin Design Excellence Program through the leadership, guidance, capacity building, and recognition initiatives of the program.
24	Explore ways to implement relevant aspects of the Darebin Good Design Guides into the planning scheme.
25	Explore the potential for a Design Excellence Fast Track approvals pathway at Darebin for residential projects of strategic significance that streamlines approvals and provides certainty for development that achieves design excellence.
26	Monitor and review the quality of development outcomes (e.g. built form, materials, landscaping, ESD outcomes) following the introduction of the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (Clause 55) and advocate to State Government for improvements to the Code on this basis.
27	Develop a Darebin Waste Management Strategy and Guidelines that plans for future growth and demand on Council's Waste Service as well as improvements to existing infrastructure to better serve the current community.
28	Review Darebin's current heritage policy and framework to ensure it meets best practice standards. Review existing heritage overlays and identify any gaps and the need for guidance within the current heritage protections in the planning scheme. This includes introducing an Aboriginal Heritage Study to elevate our pre-contact heritage.
29	Prepare a local heritage policy to guide development and assist with the assessment of demolition and new development applications on residential land affected by the Heritage Overlay. Include guidelines on how heritage developments can incorporate environmentally sustainable design and retrofits.
30	Investigate the potential to apply a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) and/or Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) to land within the creek environs of Darebin to ensure development protects and respects the environmental, landscape, and cultural heritage values of these environs.

8.2 Sustainable & Resilient Design

OUTCOME 8

New housing is located and designed in a way that seeks to achieve a zero-carbon future and supports community resilience to the impacts of climate change.

Climate change is happening and is already having a measurable impact. The global average temperature for July 2023 was the hottest on record and likely the hottest in 120,000 years. Approximately 39% of emissions in Darebin are attributable to operational energy requirements for residential purposes, the most of any sector. This proportion of emissions is projected to grow in line with anticipated population growth, unless action is taken.

Darebin is a leader in climate action, having been the first local government in the world to declare a climate emergency. In 2017, after extensive community consultation, Darebin Council again led the way with the adoption of *Darebin's Climate Emergency Plan 2017-22* and is currently progressing a plan to achieve net zero emissions by 2030.

Planning for housing has a central role to play in climate change action by influencing what kinds of homes are built and where. Key to this is encouraging the development of a more sustainable urban form, increasing the environmental performance of housing, and ensuring housing is adaptable to a changing climate.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 8.1

Facilitate the development of a compact, sustainable and climate resilient urban form through implementation of the Residential Development Framework (RDF) by focusing higher density development close to existing services, facilities, and infrastructure.

A key objective of the Residential Development Framework (RDF) is to encourage higher residential densities in areas of the municipality with greater levels of access to existing services, jobs, and public transport. A key reason for this is to help achieve a more sustainable and compact urban form. This helps to reduce energy consumption by making more efficient use of existing infrastructure and encouraging the use of sustainable modes of transport, such as walking, cycling and public transport.

Compared to detached greenfield housing development, infill housing development that occurs at higher densities can also have the added benefit of reducing energy consumption. Typically, medium-high density housing is often smaller and shares walls. This contributes towards materials conservation and thermal efficiency.

What is Sustainable Design?

Sustainable Design is based on principles that seek to reduce the environmental impact, energy consumption, and emissions associated with the built environment. Key aspects of sustainable design include:

Energy performance such as efficient heating and cooling services and passive design elements.

Indoor environment quality such as thermal comfort, daylight access, and natural ventilation.

Building materials such as the use of recycled materials and minimising embodied energy of materials.

Transport such as encouraging the use of sustainable forms of transport through appropriately located housing and provision of facilities.

Waste management such as minimising waste during the construction and operational stages of development.

Integrated water management such as minimising potable water use and incorporating water sensitive urban design to improve the quality and reduce the quantity of stormwater.

Urban ecology such as providing sufficient space for the planting of canopy trees and other landscaping.

Sustainable design not only improves the environmental performance of homes, it also reduces ongoing operating costs through reduced utility bills and improves health outcomes for residents through better internal environmental quality.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 8.2

Promote the need for improved sustainable design requirements to increase the environmental performance and reduce the ongoing operating costs of housing and move towards zero-carbon development.

Sustainable design is variously controlled through the planning and building systems. The planning systems role is somewhat limited as planning policy and requirements are only relevant where a planning permit is required or is not deemed-to-comply. As such, the majority of new or renovated single dwellings will not be captured. The Building Regulations have an important role to play in sustainable design as a building permit is required for all buildings. At present, the Building Regulation only cover aspects of sustainable design related to thermal performance (energy efficiencies standards to achieve legislated energy ratings) and aspects of integrated water management (rainwater tanks requirements for sanitary flushing).

The limitation of Building Regulations is that it does not consider aspects of design at the early stages of site analysis and conceptual design. Passive design principles such as maximising solar access through site orientation and internal layout of habitable room windows are variously controlled through the planning system.

The planning scheme includes some state-level planning policy and requirements covering aspects of sustainable design such as energy performance, water management, cooling and greening, air and noise pollution and recycling and resource recovery. These are variously covered in Clause 55.05 (sustainability), Clause 53.18 (stormwater) and Clause 56.07 (integrated water management). New gas connections in new dwellings have also been prohibited in Victoria through Amendment VC250.

At present, the guidance for sustainable design is limited in State planning policy and provisions. In 2017 (Amendment GC42) Council implemented a local ESD planning policy into the Darebin Planning Scheme. The policy seeks to ensure that development achieves best practice in environmental sustainability, from the design stage through to construction and operation. The policy covers aspects of sustainable design including energy performance, water resources, indoor environment quality, stormwater management, transport, waste management, and urban ecology.

Recent changes to Clause 55 through the Townhouse and Low-Rise code mean that this local policy has limited applicability for development of three storeys or less. Instead, the more limited requirements of Clause 55.05 (sustainability) prevail. As a result, new medium density development will be constructed to a lesser sustainability standard in Darebin.

New state-standard policies and performance standards are therefore urgently needed. As flagged in *Plan for Victoria* and the roadmap for *Environmentally Sustainable Development of Buildings and Subdivisions*, it is anticipated that the State Government will implement further environmental performance standards over the next year.

Elevating ESD Targets Planning Project

Darebin has been collaborating with the Council Alliance for a Sustainable Built Environment (CASBE), in partnership with a group of 31 councils across Victoria, in the Elevating ESD Targets Planning Project (EETPP) to improve Environmentally Sustainable Design policy in Planning Schemes.

Proposed Planning Scheme Amendment C208 aims to introduce a new set of assessment criteria at Clause 53 of the Darebin Planning Scheme that aims to facilitate best practice environmentally sustainable development and support zero carbon outcomes in new development. The Amendment proposes to introduce a set of objectives and standards which will be required to be addressed by new development, thereby strengthening Council's ability to ensure new buildings are designed in a way which minimises energy use, water and waste, improves environmental outcomes and amenity and reduces ongoing running costs for the community.

The proposed Amendment C208 is currently with the Victorian Planning Minister for authorisation.

The current requirements in the planning scheme are not sufficient for urgently addressing the climate emergency that we are facing. Council has an important role to play in elevating the current sustainable design requirements in the building and planning systems through:

- New and innovative municipal-wide planning policies and requirements in conjunction with other Councils (see 'Elevating ESD Targets Planning Project' above) to set minimum measurable targets to deliver meaningful sustainable design outcomes and encourage a move towards zero carbon development.
- Advocacy initiatives that seek to increase state-level requirements relating to sustainable design in the planning and building systems.
- The preparation of Structure Plans for activity centres and Development Plan Overlays (DPO) for large development sites that include sustainable design requirements.
- Encouraging and supporting innovative designs through the planning permit application process that elevate the sustainability of development.
- Providing sustainable design guidance to planning permit applicants through Darebin's Design Excellence Program to promote best practice environmentally sustainable design.

STRATEGIC DIRECTION 8.3

Ensure better integration of climate change adaptation considerations into decision making about the design and location of new residential development to support the resilience of the community.

Planning for housing can also support climate change adaptation. While sustainable design principles can assist with moving towards zero-carbon development to help mitigate the effects of climate change, there is also a need to ensure housing is adaptive to a changing climate in a way that supports climate resilience in the community.

We are already feeling the effects of climate change. Our climate is hotter, rainfall is more unpredictable, and extreme weather events such as storms, droughts, and floods are increasing. This has direct impacts on the safety and liveability of our neighbourhoods.

Resilience is the ability to prepare for, recover from, and adapt to climate-related shocks such as floods, heatwaves, and bushfires. In short it is about adjusting the ways we live, work, and play to keep the community safe from climate change impacts while also preventing those impacts from getting worse. Striving for resilience means the community will be prepared for and equipped to deal with a hotter and more unpredictable climate.

The design and location of housing has direct consequences for climate resilience in the community. The urban form of the city can also impact on residents' ability to access safe refuge and emergency services during climate events. As our city develops and becomes denser, increased levels of hard surfaces exacerbate the urban heat island effect and make our neighbourhoods hotter. It also contributes to greater levels of stormwater runoff, which impacts the severity of floods, which are projected to increase.

Given the urgency with which climate change must be addressed and the need for adaptation, there is a need to elevate climate change within decision-making. It requires an emergency response. It is vitally important that climate change considerations are embedded in and prioritised in decision-making about residential development.

Through advocacy initiatives to different levels of government and as the responsible authority for the Darebin Planning Scheme, Council has a role to play in ensuring decisions about residential development are responsive to the climate crisis. The following outlines ways in which decision-making should be informed by climate change adaptation:

- Encouraging an urban form through the Residential Development Framework (RDF) that focuses new residential development near existing services, including emergency services, and cool, green, open space and active and public transport networks to provide refuge during extreme weather events.
- Encouraging a housing market that is inclusive to the needs and budgets of different people to promote resilience through secure tenure.
- Ensuring flood overlays in the planning scheme are regularly up-to-date and based on the best available information regarding the effects of climate change.
- Ensuring appropriate space is provided in new development for the establishment of resilient canopy trees to help limit urban heat and provide refuge during extreme weather events.
- Encouraging sustainable design that increases the resilience of buildings. For example, the use of appropriate building materials and colours, such as using lighter over dark (low 'albedo') materials, to help limit heat absorption.
- Encouraging other design techniques that limit the amount of stormwater runoff from increased hard surfacing in residential development by using permeable surfaces, onsite water storage, and water sensitive urban design measures .
- Encouraging large-scale blue and green infrastructure as part of large residential development and as part of Council projects.
- Ensuring structure plans consider climate change adaptation when planning for activity centres by considering access to services, safe, cool, green space, and areas suited to blue green infrastructure.
- Providing appropriate guidance to planning permit applicants about resilient design techniques.

ACTIONS	
31	Continue to advocate for the Elevated Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) standards, or other initiatives that improve ESD outcomes, to be introduced into the Darebin Planning Scheme. This is particularly important in the context of recent changes to Clause 55, which have reduced sustainability standards in Darebin.
32	Integrate best practice environmentally sustainable design and climate resilience principles into the Darebin Design Excellence Program to address and provide guidance on integrating Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) into all aspects of residential development.
33	Update flood overlays in the municipality using modelling that takes into account the effects of climate change to ensure new development does not exacerbate flooding and is designed to minimise flood damage.
34	Advocate to other levels of government for greater sustainable and resilient design standards in the National Construction Code (NCC), Victorian Building Regulations (VBRs), and Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs).
35	Advocate to other levels of government for the need to elevate the consideration of climate change in all planning decision-making.

Action Plan

9.0 Actions Plan Table

The following section outlines the Action Plan for and the processes of monitoring and reviewing Parts 1 and 2 of the Housing Strategy.

It provides a five year work program for delivering on the 35 actions of the strategy.

Implementation of the actions will require an integrated approach across Council. This will be critical for the successful delivery of the strategy.

A key mechanism for implementing the aspects of the strategy addressed in this document is undertaking amendments to policies and provisions of the Darebin Planning Scheme. There are however a range of actions that require work outside beyond updates to the planning scheme, such as through advocacy. The action plan provides details about how each action will be delivered.

9.1 Action Plan

The Implementation Plan sets out the 35 actions that will be undertaken by Council to implement the Housing Strategy.

Each action is provided with a timeframe for delivery, defined as:

- Short term: 0 to 2 years
- Medium term: 2 to 5 years
- Long term: 5+ years
- Ongoing: part of Council's ongoing work program

The actions have been assigned a unit/s within Council with primary responsibility. Other units within Council and other stakeholders including government departments, industry bodies, and the community will also play a role as actions are further scoped and delivered.

The actions are linked back to the relevant strategic directions that the actions are implementing. They are also categorised according to types of action:

- Planning Scheme Amendment (PSA)
- Further Strategic Work (FSW)
- Advocacy & Research (AR)
- Process Improvement (PI)

9.2 Monitoring & Review

The actions in the implementation plan will be monitored regularly. A yearly report will be prepared and presented to Council that will outline:

- A status update for each action including key outcomes/findings.
- An evaluation of each action against expected timeframes.
- Recommendations for further actions required to implement the strategy.

The Housing Strategy will be reviewed every ten years.

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
1	Update the Darebin Planning Scheme to: • Replace the Housing Framework Plan in the Municipal Planning Strategy with the Residential Development Framework (RDF). • Update the Planning Policy Framework (PPF) with content from the Housing Strategy. • Update existing and introduce new residential zone schedules for Minimal, Incremental, and Increased Change areas. • Introduce new planning controls (i.e. a combination of zones and overlays to guide built form outcomes) for Substantial Change (residential) areas. • Include the Housing Strategy as a Background Document.	Short	Strategic Planning	PSA	1.1
2	Along with Action 1, prepare built form and design controls for Substantial Change (residential) areas to help guide quality development outcomes. This should also include a review of existing planning controls (e.g. Design and Development Overlays) that apply to existing Substantial Change (residential)/ Residential Growth Zone (RGZ) areas.	Short	Strategic Planning City Design	FSW	1.1

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
3	Prepare a new structure plan for the Northcote Major Activity Centre. As part of this, investigate the potential of surrounding heritage areas to accommodate greater levels of housing growth without impacting on heritage values.	Medium	Strategic Planning City Design	FSW	1.1
4	Prepare an update to the Darebin Economic Land Use Strategy to, amongst other things: • Identify potential urban renewal sites or precincts for mixed use development on underperforming locally significant industrial land where it can be demonstrated this land is no longer required for industrial purposes. Help define a new activity centre hierarchy for the municipality that identifies the role and function of each centre.	Medium	Strategic Planning Economic Development	FSW	1.1

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
5	Identify key indicators (approvals and construction rates) for monitoring residential development and where it is occurring across the municipality. Establish linkages between planning permits, building permits, and occupancy permits systems and the GIS database at Council to help establish a better system for monitoring residential development, housing trends, and infrastructure requirements across the municipality.	Medium	Statutory Planning Building Unit	PI	1.1
6	Review the municipal-wide Development Contributions Plan Overlay (DCPO) and update as required in accordance with population growth and identified infrastructure needs.	Long	Strategic Planning Capital Works Open Space Infrastructure	PI	2.2
7	Continue work on amending the planning scheme at Clause 53.01 to increase the public open space contribution when land is subdivided. At the same time, advocate to State government for reforms to the *Subdivision Act 1988* and Clause 53.01 of the planning scheme that enable the ability to seek open space contributions from build-to-rent development and other models that do not currently trigger a contribution.	Short	Strategic Planning Open Space Infrastructure	PSA AR	2.2

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
8	Continue gathering data on the demand and need for, and undertake a review and gather usage data on, community infrastructure in the municipality to help identify gaps in community infrastructure provision to inform an investment plan.	Short	Strategic Planning Open Space Infrastructure	FSW	2.3
9	Consider the implications of the Residential Development Framework (RDF) when reviewing and updating the Darebin Transport Strategy.	Short	Sustainable Transport	FSW	2.4
10	Explore options for setting different car parking and bicycle parking requirements for new development in appropriate locations close to public transport and activity centres that help facilitate behaviour shifts to more sustainable modes of transport.	Medium	Sustainable Transport Strategic Planning	FSW	2.4
11	Advocate to State government for additional and improved public transport services and connections, and greater investment in active transport, across Darebin as outlined within Darebin's Transport Strategy, especially in areas poorly serviced by public transport.	Ongoing	Sustainable Transport	AR	2.1
12	Implement the actions of Darebin's Climate Emergency Plan related to Community Resilience to ensure Council buildings, infrastructure, and facilities are climate resilient and support the safety of Darebin's growing community.	Ongoing	Multiple	PI	2.5

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
13	Review housing diversity policy in the Planning Policy Framework and update consistent with this Housing Strategy. Consider setting dwelling size targets in local policy, particularly for larger developments.	Short	Strategic Planning	PSA	3.1-3.5
14	Undertake a review of building and planning systems following the accessible design changes to the Building Regulations and determine what measures are required to further accessible design in new residential development. This could include the preparation of guidelines to provide to planning permit applicants or a local policy that outlines Council's expectations with respect to accessible design.	Short	Statutory Planning	PI	4.1
15	Advocate to national and state government to increase accessible design requirements in the National Construction Code (NCC), Victorian Building Regulations (VBRs), and Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs).	Ongoing	Strategic Planning Statutory Planning	AR	4.1
16	Consider preparing a Student Accommodation Policy that can be implemented through Clause 16.01 of the Planning Policy Framework. The policy should set expectations in relation to the location of student accommodation, room layout, common areas, car parking, and bicycle storage.	Medium	Strategic Planning Statutory Planning Sustainable Transport	FSW	4.4

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
17	Amend the planning scheme to: • Introduce new residential zone schedules for Increased, Incremental, and Minimal change areas that implement aspects of the Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines in Appendix 1. • Amend the Planning Policy Framework with aspects of the Preferred Character Statements and Guidelines in Appendix 1 that cannot be addressed through the residential zone schedules.	Short	Strategic Planning	PSA	5.1
18	Explore the need for a Neighbourhood Character Overlay (NCO) in areas of special neighbourhood character.	Medium	Strategic Planning	FSW	5.2
19	Prepare Landscape Guidelines for the municipality and explore ways to, where possible, implement the landscaping guidance of the Preferred Character Statements & Guidelines in the Darebin Planning Scheme. Explore avenues to increase canopy coverage near waterways beyond state-standard tree canopy coverage provisions.	Short	City Design Strategic Planning Parks and Open Space	FSW	6.1
20	Prepare a new Urban Forest Strategy for the municipality that can consider, amongst other things, the greater use of the Vegetation Protection Overlay (VPO) and Environmental Significance Overlay (ESO).	Medium	Strategic Planning Parks and Open Space	FSW	6.1

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
21	Undertake a study that investigates mechanisms that seek to encourage lot consolidation and precinct-level redevelopment in existing residential neighbourhoods. This could include: • Identifying suitable 'greyfield' precincts within the municipality and determining appropriate planning mechanisms to encourage precinct-level residential development. • Determining built form and design controls that assist with overcoming feasibility issues with four storey and greater development in Substantial Change areas. These investigations should determine planning controls to deliver high-quality built form outcomes and help incentivise lot consolidation.	Medium	Strategic Planning Statutory planning	FSW	7.1
22	Advocate to State government for state-wide mechanisms and incentives to encourage lot consolidation through infill development.	Ongoing	Strategic Planning	AR	7.1
23	Continue to implement the Darebin Design Excellence Program through the leadership, guidance, capacity building, and recognition initiatives of the program.	Ongoing	Statutory Planning	PI	7.2

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
24	Explore ways to implement relevant aspects of the Darebin Good Design Guides into the planning scheme.	Short	Strategic Planning	FSW	7.2
25	Explore the potential for a Design Excellence Fast Track approvals pathway at Darebin for residential projects of strategic significance that streamlines approvals and provides certainty for development that achieves design excellence.	Medium	Strategic Planning Statutory Planning City Design	FSW PI	7.3
26	Monitor and review the quality of development outcomes (e.g. built form, materials, landscaping, ESD outcomes) following the introduction of the Townhouse and Low-Rise Code (Clause 55) and advocate to State Government for improvements to the Code on this basis.	Short to medium	Statutory Planning Strategic Planning	AR	7.3
27	Develop a Darebin Waste Management Strategy and Guidelines that plans for future growth and demand on Council's Waste Service as well as improvements to existing infrastructure to better serve the current community.	Short	Strategic Planning City Works Statutory Planning	FSW/PI	7.4

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
28	Review Darebin's current heritage policy and framework to ensure it meets best practice standards. Review existing heritage overlays and identify any gaps and the need for guidance within the current heritage protections in the planning scheme. This includes introducing an Aboriginal Heritage Study to elevate our pre-contact heritage.	Short	Strategic Planning	FSW	7.5-7.6
29	Prepare a local heritage policy to guide development and assist with the assessment of demolition and new development applications on residential land affected by the Heritage Overlay. Include guidelines on how heritage developments can incorporate environmentally sustainable design and retrofits.	Medium	Strategic Planning Heritage Advisor	FSW	7.6
30	Investigate the potential to apply a Design and Development Overlay (DDO) and/or Significant Landscape Overlay (SLO) to land within the creek environs of Darebin to ensure development protects and respects the environmental, landscape, and cultural heritage values of these environs.	Medium	Strategic Planning Parks and Open Space	FSW	7.5

HOUSING STRATEGY ACTION PLAN TABLE

#	Action	Timeframe	Lead Unit/s	Type	Strategic Direction/s
31	Continue to advocate for the Elevated Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) standards, or other initiatives that improve ESD outcomes, to be introduced into the Darebin Planning Scheme.	Short	Climate Emergency Strategic Planning	AR	8.2
32	Integrate best practice environmentally sustainable design and climate resilience principles into the Darebin Design Excellence Program to address and provide guidance on the integration of Environmentally Sustainable Design (ESD) into all aspects of residential development.	Medium	Climate Emergency Strategic Planning	FSW	8.3
33	Update flood overlays in the municipality using modelling that takes into account the effects of climate change to ensure new development does not exacerbate flooding and is designed to minimise flood damage.	Short	Strategic Planning Integrated Water Management	PSA	8.3
34	Advocate to other levels of government for great sustainable and resilient design standards in the National Construction Code (NCC), Victorian Building Regulations (VBRs), and Victoria Planning Provisions (VPPs).	Ongoing	Climate Emergency Strategic Planning	AR	8.3
35	Advocate to other levels of government for the need to elevate the consideration of climate change in all planning decision-making.	Ongoing	Climate Emergency Strategic Planning	AR	8.3

CITY OF DAREBIN

274 Gower Street, Preston
PO Box 91, Preston, Vic 3072
T 8470 8888 **F** 8470 8877
E mailbox@darebin.vic.gov.au
darebin.vic.gov.au

National Relay Service
relayservice.gov.au

If you are deaf, or have a hearing or speech impairment, contact us through the National Relay Service.

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T 8470 8470

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