

## Housing affordability and affordable living

Like many regions in South East Queensland and across Australia, the Sunshine Coast is experiencing significant housing affordability and cost of living challenges.

Affordability is a complex issue, and the proposed planning scheme is only one of many possible initiatives that can work towards improving affordability. While the up-front cost of housing is important (housing affordability), it is also important that new housing and neighbourhoods are located and designed in a way that reduces the total cost of living including transportation, energy and insurance costs (affordable living).

'Affordable housing' is housing that is appropriate to the needs of households with low to moderate incomes, where the members of the households will spend no more than 30% of their gross income on housing costs.



### **What are the growth and affordability challenges on the Sunshine Coast?**

The population of the Sunshine Coast is expected to continue growing. By 2046, it is estimated the Sunshine Coast will have an additional 219,100 residents, requiring an additional 84,800 dwellings.

Housing prices on the Sunshine Coast have increased and are now well above national and state averages. Spurred by increased growth, there has also been a sustained decrease in rental vacancies and a surge in rental costs. One of the challenges is that there is not enough housing to match the demand from existing and new residents, whether it be to buy or to rent. There is also a significant mismatch between the types of housing being built (primarily large family homes) and household size, with an ongoing trend towards smaller households.

### **What roles do the Commonwealth and State Governments have in providing affordable housing and for housing affordability more generally?**

The housing sector is complex with many factors influencing supply and demand, including financial regulation and taxation policy by Commonwealth and State Governments. It is the role of Commonwealth and State Governments to deliver social housing and infrastructure to support development on the Sunshine Coast. Council continues to advocate for improved provision of such housing and infrastructure.

# Housing affordability and affordable living information sheet

The State Government held the [Queensland Housing Summit](#) in October 2022 to address the challenges of housing across the State (refer to [Queensland Housing Summit Outcomes Report 2022](#)).

The State Government's ['ShapingSEQ' South East Queensland Regional Plan 2023](#) (SEQ Regional Plan) seeks to respond to the challenge of providing affordable housing by planning for more homes in well-located places. The SEQ Regional Plan also sets targets for local governments to provide greater housing diversity through their planning schemes.



State government development schemes for master planned communities like Caloundra South (Aura) and Maroochydore City Centre also aim to increase housing supply and diversity.

## **What is Council's role in providing affordable housing and for housing affordability more generally?**

As a local government, Council has a part to play in establishing policies that influence the housing sector, including land use planning, approving development, provision of local infrastructure as well as influencing some costs associated with housing (e.g. setting rates and development application fees).

However, whilst Council's planning scheme can provide the policy settings to support the delivery of new houses, ultimately the delivery of housing is mainly undertaken by developers in the private sector.

Council's [Sunshine Coast Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2023](#) builds on Council's existing commitments to provide guidance and establish new initiatives directed at achieving a more secure housing future for our community.

## **What is the role of the development industry and community organisations?**

The development industry is a pivotal contributor to the delivery of housing and associated infrastructure. It is important that Council works with the development industry through advocacy and facilitation to achieve more responsive housing outcomes. Not-for-profit and community organisations also play a vital role in providing community housing.

Some Council owned land is currently being utilised to provide affordable homes by [working in partnership with community housing providers](#).

It is acknowledged that the development and building industries have been experiencing many challenges in recent times, including construction and supply issues as well as financial constraints, which continue to impact the delivery of housing.

## **How important is housing location, diversity and good design?**

New housing needs to be suitable for its residents, and it is important that policy settings encourage different housing options to be provided. Social housing, student

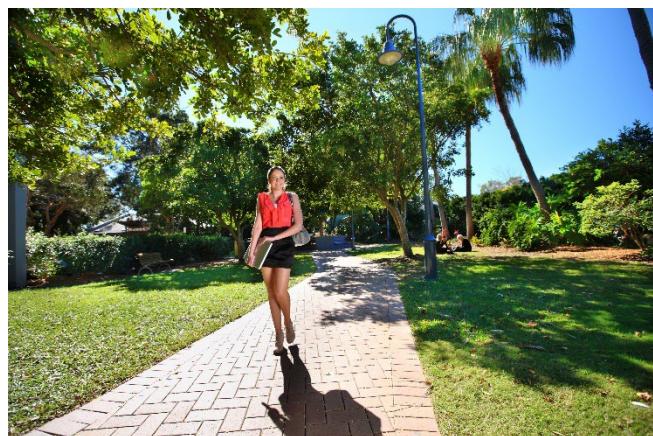
**Disclaimer** The contents of this information sheet deals with technical matters in a summary way only and has been prepared to assist the community to understand the proposed planning scheme. Please refer to the proposed planning scheme for further detail. © Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2025

# Housing affordability and affordable living information sheet

accommodation, independent living units, residential care and crisis and transitional accommodation are all part of the mix of housing needed.

The current mix of housing on the Sunshine Coast is not well suited to the current or expected future population. Despite an ongoing trend towards 1 and 2 person households, neighbourhoods are typically low-density residential areas with large family homes. This not only means there is a lack of housing diversity and smaller dwelling types (which are also generally more affordable) but that we also spend more time and money just getting around.

Locating a variety of new housing types close to centres, employment, services, recreation and other key attractors, as well as existing and planned public transport, creates more sustainable neighbourhoods that support walking, riding and public transport use to promote affordable living. Locating new housing where the most efficient use can be made of existing infrastructure also eases costs for infrastructure providers, which are often passed on to end users.



New housing that incorporates good design principles, appropriate materials and innovative construction techniques will be more responsive to our subtropical climate. In the long term, this will provide for homes that are more affordable to

manage and live in, for example through reduced heating and cooling costs, water reuse and conservation.

Finally, avoiding expanding housing into areas subject to natural hazards and ensuring new housing is designed to be resilient not only helps keep the community safe, but also reduces ongoing insurance costs.

## **What measures does the proposed planning scheme identify to promote housing affordability and affordable living?**

The proposed planning scheme seeks to include policy settings that help to address housing affordability and affordable living by:

- increasing the supply of zoned land available for all types of housing to meet projected population growth and State Government targets via a mix of well-located new housing options in suitable expansion and consolidation areas
- including requirements for development to achieve the SEQ Regional Plan affordable housing targets of 20% affordable housing (including 5% public/community housing) in new master-planned communities
- including new provisions to allow community housing to be developed on Council-owned or controlled land, or in association with a place of worship
- identifying new height exemptions (up to 2 storeys and 6.4 metres) for affordable build-to-rent, public and community housing in certain higher density residential areas close to larger centres
- allowing new on-site parking concessions for community housing and affordable build-to-rent

**Disclaimer** The contents of this information sheet deals with technical matters in a summary way only and has been prepared to assist the community to understand the proposed planning scheme. Please refer to the proposed planning scheme for further detail. © Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2025

# Housing affordability and affordable living information sheet

- providing new dwelling diversity targets to require a percentage of smaller dwellings to be provided in large multi-unit residential developments
- introducing a new Low-Medium Density Residential Zone to provide for a range of low-rise mixed housing outcomes in well-located areas, including small lot housing and terrace lots down to 180m<sup>2</sup>
- discouraging small residential lots, new dwelling houses and dual occupancies in the Medium and High Density Residential Zones to protect these areas for apartment development
- providing more opportunities for dual occupancies to establish in the Low Density Residential Zone, with a focus on corner lots
- reducing the minimum lot size in the Low Density Residential Zone in coastal urban areas
- providing greater opportunities for small-scale rooming accommodation
- providing greater opportunities for secondary dwellings (e.g. 'granny flats') and allowing them to be larger in urban zones and further away from the primary dwelling
- including provisions to ensure new secondary dwellings are used for long-term rental or multi-generational households rather than holiday accommodation.

## How can I find out more?

- Go to the following [information sheets](#):
  - Managing population growth
  - Urban expansion land supply
  - Coastal Corridor
- Find out the zoning and overlay mapping that is [proposed for your property](#)
- If you have a question, contact Council's planning scheme team:
  - Email: [newplanningscheme@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au](mailto:newplanningscheme@sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au)
  - Phone: 07 5409 0570

To explore the proposed planning scheme or make a submission, scan the QR code or visit:

<https://haveoursay.sunshinecoast.qld.gov.au/newplanningscheme>



**Disclaimer** The contents of this information sheet deals with technical matters in a summary way only and has been prepared to assist the community to understand the proposed planning scheme. Please refer to the proposed planning scheme for further detail. © Sunshine Coast Regional Council 2025