

21 June, 2016

SHELTER TAS SUBMISSION TO THE HOBART CITY COUNCIL ON THE DRAFT HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY

PREAMBLE

Shelter Tas is an independent, not-for-profit peak organisation representing the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, housing providers and Specialist Homelessness Services across Tasmania.

Shelter Tas is committed to working towards a fairer and more just housing system. We provide an independent voice on housing rights and a link between governments and the community through consultation, research and policy advice. We seek to improve housing access for all Tasmanians.

Shelter Tas' vision is that every person has affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing and our mission is to end homelessness in Tasmania.

Shelter Tas applauds THE City of Hobart's initiative in developing the *Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy, 2016-19* (the Draft Strategy) and through it, its ongoing commitment to promoting social inclusion for the citizens of Hobart. We recognise the significant influence that Council's policies and actions have on facilitating social inclusion and access for residents to appropriate and affordable housing in the City. The Draft Strategy provides a comprehensive overview of and context for the housing affordability and homelessness issues facing the City.

Shelter Tas appreciates being consulted by the City of Hobart during the formulation of the Draft Strategy and this further opportunity to provide input. We look forward to continuing to work with Council in developing and implementing the Strategy once operational.

OVERVIEW OF OUR RESPONSE

Shelter Tas endorses the social inclusion intention of the Draft Strategy and Council's clarity about its role in relation to housing. We also commend Council's intention to pursue the Strategy across its 7 Outcome Domains so that activities across its operational areas contribute towards a common purpose.

We feel there is an opportunity to strengthen and clarify some of the intentions in the Draft Strategy and the Domain Action Plans and have made a series of recommendations to that effect.

We also believe it is important for the Draft Strategy to explicitly recognise people who are homeless as residents, so that they are assured a legitimate place in the City.

While relatively comprehensive in its coverage, we would like to raise one issue not addressed that we think important. This is the potential impact of the City's urban consolidation and renewal planning policies. While we support consolidation as a positive planning intent, displacement of existing affordable accommodation and support services is an associated risk. As inner city development gathers pace it will be important to also plan to support the retention of existing affordable short term accommodation (such as private boarding houses) and low cost office spaces occupied by the agencies providing support services to the City's marginalised citizens. The City of Hobart is in the position to benefit from experience in other Australian cities where this infrastructure has been eroded through gentrification, and instead to take a proactive role in retaining it.

Our recommendations follow.

RECOMMENDATIONS

(Please Note: underlined text represents proposed new text and strikethrough ~~text~~ represents the deletion of existing text.)

Recommendations for the Draft Housing and Homelessness Strategy, 2016-19

Shelter Tas recommends that the Draft Strategy include some clear statements about its aims, as a basis for supporting the Domain Action Plans. These could perhaps be included under the last section titled: *Priority Areas of Activity*. We suggest the following:

Access to appropriate and affordable housing supports social inclusion by valuing citizens and providing the basis for their participation in education, employment and civic affairs. The aims of this Strategy are to promote social inclusion by:

1. Recognising that all citizens should have access to appropriate and affordable housing.
2. Promoting socially mixed communities through enabling housing diversity and affordability across the City.
3. Recognising people who are homeless as residents of the City.
4. Monitor the potential impact of the City's land use planning measures on affordability and displacement of low income residents from inner urban areas.
5. Working in collaboration with others to address housing affordability and homelessness issues.

Recommendations for the Domain Action Plans 2015/2016

The following suggested amendments are offered:

Domain Action Plan: Community Engagement and Participation

Initiatives / Actions
Support programs and activities that encourage a livable, people friendly city with opportunity for civic participation <u>by all</u> .
Provide and encourage the use <u>by all</u> of Council assets, parks and open spaces that enhance inner city living and ensure access to services and parking.
Work with UTAS to support and provide opportunities for international students who will be residing in the new university accommodation in Melville Street <u>to participate in community life</u> .
Ensure that the Council continues to be accessible <u>to</u> and builds formal links and collaboration with the <u>community housing and homelessness</u> sector. (Including the nomination of a specific person as a first point of contact and coordinator for affordable housing.)
<u>Work with the community housing and homelessness sector to raise general community awareness about homelessness, including through continuing to participate in such occasions as Homelessness Week.</u>

Domain Action Plan: Vibrant Places

Initiatives / Actions
Continue the activation and place-making role to benefit all, promoting <u>inclusion</u> , connectivity and liveability.
As part of the upgrading and development of the City, provide appropriate infrastructure for homeless people, in particular showers, water bubblers / refill station, recharge stations for mobile phones and Wi-Fi hot spots.
<u>Continue to provide Council training and awareness raising sessions for relevant City of Hobart staff.</u>

Domain Action Plan: Affordable Living

Initiatives / Actions
<p><i>Existing Action:</i></p> <p>Lobby The Local Government Association of Tasmania and State Government for:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Affordable housing provisions through the Land Use Planning Approval Act 1993 and the proposed State Planning Provisions. 2. Adaptable Housing Legislation, through the Building Act 2000
<p><i>Proposed New Actions:</i></p> <p><u>Partner with Shelter Tas to approach the Local Government Association of Tasmania to discuss the potential for a regional approach to addressing affordable housing and homelessness issues in Greater Hobart.</u></p>
<p><u>Attend the Southern Southern Homelessness Services Forum to share information and consult with the homelessness sector in the Hobart region.</u></p>

Domain Action Plan: Community Safety

Initiatives / Actions
<p><u>Working in collaboration with the homelessness sector, continue to fund the distribution of resources to homeless residents in Hobart.</u></p>
<p><u>Collaborate with other agencies and the homelessness sector to enhance the safety of the City's homeless residents, including addressing issues relating to substance abuse and mental health.</u></p>

We hope that these comments and suggestions will help to add value to the Draft Strategy and appreciate the opportunity to have discussed them with you prior to finalising this submission. Thank you again for the opportunity to participate.

Yours sincerely,



Pattie Chugg
Executive Officer,
Shelter Tas