

2.4 REGIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOMELESSNESS & SOCIAL HOUSING GROUP CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to seek Council to review and note the Charter Annual report (refer **Attachment 1**).

KEY CONSIDERATIONS/ISSUES

Council has had a longstanding commitment to addressing homelessness and the housing affordability crisis. In 2015, Monash hosted a forum for CEOs and executive staff representing 13 Eastern and South-Eastern Councils in response to an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping across the region. Since then, a Charter detailing a unified, local government response to homelessness and advocacy for reform to increase the supply of social housing across Victoria was developed.

Following the forum, CEOs of all 13 Councils nominated 'Charter Champions' to represent their council in a Charter Group. Since February 2020, the Charter Group has met regularly to enact the principles, purpose, regional and local commitments of the Charter.

The Charter Annual report provides the 13 Eastern and South-Eastern Councils with an update on the activities of the Charter Group and the outcomes of the annual review. It also recommends priority areas and operational improvements for the year ahead.

CONCLUSION/RECOMMENDATION

That Council note the Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Group Charter Annual Report and publish the report for public access on Council's webpage.

**REGIONAL LOCAL GOVERNMENT HOMELESSNESS & SOCIAL HOUSING
GROUP CHARTER ANNUAL REPORT**

Responsible Director: Russell Hopkins, Community Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council notes Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Group Charter Annual Report

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with an annual update of the Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Charter and for Council to note the Charter Annual Report (refer **Attachment 1**).

BACKGROUND

During late 2019, CEOs and executive staff representing 13 Eastern and South-Eastern Councils came together in a forum focused on homelessness and social housing hosted by Monash Council in response to an increase in homelessness and rough sleeping across the region. Since then, a Charter detailing a unified, local government response to homelessness and advocacy for reform to increase the supply of social housing across Victoria was developed.

The Charter recognises that housing is a human right for every person, that housing solves homelessness, and that social housing is core infrastructure for local communities. The Charter ensures the 13 metropolitan Councils are united to address the urgent need for increased social housing and a more effective, integrated and supported homelessness system, through cooperating regionally and taking action locally. The Councils represent more than 2 million residents. Over one-third of Victorians experiencing homelessness live in this region. The Councils seek action towards systemic change to improve homelessness policy-setting and service sector through a focus on priority projects to give effect to the Charter.

Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group

Following the 2019 forum, CEOs of all 13 Councils nominated 'Charter Champions' to represent their council in a Charter Group. Since February 2020, the Charter Group has met regularly to enact the principles, purpose, regional and local commitments of the Charter.

The Charter Group comprises the Cities of Bayside, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Mornington Peninsula, and Whitehorse and the Shire of Yarra

Ranges. Since its inception, Monash Council has led the Charter Group and provides leadership, convening and secretariat support. The CEO of Monash Council, Dr Andi Diamond is the Charter spokesperson.

Charter partners include the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Homes Victoria in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and the Greater South-East Melbourne Group of Councils (GSEM) which support the work of the Charter Group.

DISCUSSION

The Charter Annual report provides the 13 Eastern and South-Eastern councils with an update on the activities of the Charter Group and the outcomes of the annual review. It also recommends priority areas and operational improvements for the year ahead.

This year's report provides Council with details on the following areas

- Summary of 2022 activities to support Charter implementation
 - Meetings, forums, workshops and webinars
 - Advocacy, submissions and communications
 - Research and reports
 - Projects
- Housing and homelessness context for 2023
- Recommendations and operational improvements for the year ahead

The Charter Annual report captures the breadth of initiatives conducted by The Charter Group and represents a powerful example of the local government sector's ability to collaborate, engage and advocate towards an improved homelessness service system and to increase the supply of social housing.

However, it is important to note that, post COVID-19, homelessness levels are again increasing, economic pressures are mounting and the gap between the supply and need for affordable housing across the region continues to grow. This, coupled with cost-of-living crisis and unemployment increase, means that now more than ever, the local government sector needs to continue to be a powerful champion in advocating for more permanent, safe, accessible, and timely housing for those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The *Charter Annual Report* aligns to Council's Municipal Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021 – 2025, where dedicated social housing and related homelessness actions are embedded, implemented and evaluated. The Charter Annual report is also aligned to the *Monash Social Housing Framework 2020 – 2025* and Regional Local Government Charter Homelessness & Social Housing.

CONSULTATION

The development of the Charter Annual Report is informed by a brief discussion paper, as well as several consultation activities. Consultations took place with stakeholders including a survey distributed to the 13 Charter Councils and discussions with partner or organisations.

SOCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The Charter Group (and subsequently the Annual Report) seeks systemic change to increase the supply of permanent, safe, appropriate and timely housing for the most vulnerable members of our community and to embed 'Housing First' as key foundational principle, fundamental to health, recovery and safety.

The work of the charter promotes human rights, gender equity and enables better outcomes for vulnerable people who may be at risk or experiencing housing stress or homelessness.

HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

The Charter Group recognises that housing is a human right for every person and that housing solves homelessness and is committed to taking steps towards ensuring increased social housing supply and a more effective homelessness system.

GENDER EQUITY ASSESSMENT

As the Annual Charter Report is not policy, program or service, a gender impact assessment has not/will not be undertaken on this report. However, when conducting any policy/program/services that come out of this report, Council will consider whether or not a gender impact assessment is required.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Support to the Charter Group is undertaken utilising existing Council resourcing. There are no financial implications attached to the Charter Annual Report.

CONCLUSION

The Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Group Charter Annual Report is presented for Council to note.

The Report reflects Council's commitment to addressing homelessness and the housing affordability crisis. The report details the 2022 activities of the Charter group and priority areas and operational improvements for the year ahead. Following endorsement by Council at its March meeting, it is intended that the report will be made publicly available on Council's webpage.



Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Group

Report of 2022 Activities and Year Ahead



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1. Purpose

This report provides CEOs and Councils with an update on the activities of the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter Group (Charter Group) and the outcomes of the annual review.

It also recommends priority areas and operational improvements for the year ahead, as detailed in Attachment 1: Terms of Reference.

2. Overview

Post COVID-19 homelessness levels are again increasing, economic pressures are mounting and the gap between the supply and need for affordable housing across the region is growing.

To inform this report a brief discussion paper and survey were circulated to Charter Councils and discussions with stakeholders were held. Key findings from that process are that:

- **the operating environment changed significantly in 2022:**
 - o an election year - State and Federal
 - o high staff turnover
 - o unwelcome changes proposed to exempt social and affordable housing (SAH) from rates
 - o abandonment of proposed state-wide mandatory contribution for social housing
 - o unexplained delay in the release of the 10-year Strategy (due April 2022)
 - o significant discussions about a Compact (not resulting in a Compact)

- **the local government sectors engagement with Social and Affordable Housing has increased:**
 - o the foundational stage for the Charter Group has passed
 - o all Charter Councils have integrated SAH into key plans
 - o the focus on homelessness and SAH across government, media, peak bodies and the community, housing and development sectors has also increased
 - o the Homes Victoria funded role at the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV) enables an active state-wide inter-council affordable housing forum (ICAHF)
 - o a revitalised Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA) with strengthened policy and project capacity for the eastern region is also benefitting the Charter Group
 - o despite Charter Group advocacy, the need for greater community understanding of homelessness and SAH remains, leaving many SAH projects facing strong community opposition

- **survey findings include:**
 - o **turnover of Champions:** Eight councils have had changes, with five having over 3 changes; CEOs were involved in 2/3 of the changes but only half of the changes involved on-boarding of new Champion
 - o **activity:** All Councils have been active in the past year across media, communications, advocacy and projects; with greatest involvement of councils in the Big Housing Build (BHB) when local projects are funded. The BHB has increased councils focus on homelessness and social housing and their engagement with Homes Victoria, housing associations and developers.
 - o **Charter support to Councils:** continued engagement with Homes Victoria, joint submissions and advocacy were identified the best areas to support councils in implementing the BHB, with research and community information also important
 - o **State Strategy and a National Plan**, as well as land, were seen as the biggest opportunities to improve housing options and/or reduce housing vulnerability and homelessness:
 - o **feedback / suggestions for 2023:** engagement, information sharing and advocacy; sharper focus (given financial constraints and progress of opportunities); more project-based work

Given the changing environment, stronger sector capacity and council feedback the Charter Group reviewed and found that the purpose, principles & regional commitments of the Charter remain valid.

Purpose: to address the urgent need for increased social housing and a more effective, integrated and supported homelessness system through cooperating regionally and taking action locally.

Regional Commitments: 1: work in partnership, 2: scope land for Social and Affordable Housing, 3: advocate for mandatory inclusionary zoning.

Principles: Shared responsibility, accountability and success; Housing as core infrastructure; Human rights and 'Housing First'; and Urgency, innovation and collaboration .

3. Activities

The Charter Group undertook a range of activities to support Charter implementation. These are summarised below.

3.1 Meetings, forums, workshops and webinars

The Group held five meetings in 2022. Homes Victoria and the MAV attend all Charter Group meetings. The December meeting was a forum with the MAV Inter Council Affordable Housing Forum (ICAHF) and the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA).

Presentations to the Charter Group included:

- **Housing All Australians: Rob Pradolin, Founder and Director** - Housing All Australians (HAA) is a private sector group using a commercial lens to help address Australia's chronic shortage of low-income affordable housing. It brings together individuals and corporates who share the vision that Australia's long term economic interests benefit through housing all Australians, including those on low incomes. See [HAA - Housing All Australians](#)
- **Village 21 Model and development opportunities:** Pete Zwiers, Head of Programs, Kids Under Cover and Leon Jordan Team Leader for Anglicare's Lead Tenant & AOD Programs. Village 21 is a scaled-up, co-located version of Kid Under Cover's existing Studio Program located in Preston. It provides studios for six young people, giving them a stable home, wrap around supports and communal living elements for up to three years. It is delivered in partnership with Anglicare Victoria. See [Village 21 - Kids Under Cover \(kuc.org.au\)](#)
- **Homes Victoria Affordable Housing Rental Scheme: Nick Grant-Collins, Senior Adviser, Affordable Housing Strategy.** An Australian-first that will make 2,400 rental homes available to low income earners as NRAS winds down. It is a shift of focus from securing the subsidy for the developer to the retail investor See [Affordable Housing Rental Scheme | Homes Victoria](#)
- **Aboriginal Housing Victoria:** Pren Dodaj, Director Assets and Development and Lisa Briggs, Director Strategy and Performance. See [Home | Aboriginal Housing Victoria \(vahhf.org.au\)](#)
- **Productivity Commission: Malcolm Roberts, Commissioner** - Housing and Homelessness Agreement Review. This meeting was opened up to all interested councils.

One webinar and one forum were held in 2022.

- **Social and affordable housing through Planning Schemes - Planners' forum**
The webinar was supported by Bayside Council and the Mornington Peninsula Shire Council. It enabled strategic and statutory planners to discuss how planning can more consistently and efficiently support an increase in the supply of SAH. In the absence of a state-wide contribution mechanism, a regional approach was supported and a working group formed.
- **MAV / CHIA resources overview - webinar**
CHIA provided an overview of the resources developed for councils that are seeking to use council land and / or planning agreements to secure affordable housing. [CHIA: Developing Community Housing Agreements](#)

3.2 Advocacy, submissions and communications

In a year with both a Federal and State election, and with proposed planning and rating reforms negatively impacting councils, advocacy was a major focus through submissions and attendance at meetings, workshops and forums.

Key submissions included:

Productivity Commission (PCA) Housing and Homelessness Agreement (NHHA) Review

A comprehensive submission was made. The review examined how well Australian, State and Territory Governments have achieved the objectives, outcomes and outputs set out in the Agreement, and the suitability of the Agreement for the future.

The Charter Group's submission was extensively referenced in the PCA report. It emphasised the need for the NHHA to

- increase the focus on homelessness prevention and an integrated service system
- increase the focus on funding, maintaining and growing public and community housing
- identify and fund best practice models of social housing and housing support
- support a National Housing and Homelessness Strategy, including targets and data sharing

It also called for (outside of the NHHA) incentives for private investment in social and affordable housing.

The report, titled 'In Need Of Repair' found that Australia has a housing affordability problem and that the NHHA, intended to improve access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing, was ineffective. It stressed the opportunity for governments to work together on a national reform agenda to make housing more affordable through the next agreement and Plan. Improving the affordability of the private rental market and the targeting of housing assistance was identified as a priority.

See the review report (Charter submission #92): www.pc.gov.au/inquiries/completed/housing-homelessness#report

MAV draft Strategic Statement and Local Government Compact

Through our submission to the MAV draft Strategic Statement we drew attention to Charter Councils concerns regarding the proposal to exempt SAH from paying council rates, and concerns about the MAV entering into a Compact with Homes Victoria in the absence of the 10-year Strategy.

Other points included:

- need to deal with homelessness, social, and affordable housing separately
- consider new and upgraded SAH targets that identify local needs in locations with access to services
- the need for strategies to prevent homelessness and to recognise the important role of private rooming houses and private affordable rental properties which form part of the SAH continuum
- to reference and support the Victorian State-Local Government agreement and the principles (including for Strategic Planning) contained in the Local Government Act 2020

Charter Councils participated in the extensive engagement Homes Victoria initiated to discuss the proposed compact.

Other submissions were:

- Proposal to exempt SAH from paying council rates
- State-wide social housing contribution through planning
- Bayside Councils c184 Affordable Housing amendment

Councils were provided with a summary document of Federal party policy positions and commitments relating to homelessness and social or affordable housing. Key observations included:

- Liberal focus is around the homebuyer and the capacity of future home buyers to enter the housing market. Commonwealth Rent Assistance continues with twice yearly increments. They do not propose a national plan and will rely on the NHHA as the main vehicle. Their major point of difference from Labor is around a new future fund financial stream, which is enduring and would grow as income from that investment stream grows, but is unclear if it would be sufficient to close out the SAH gap.
- Labor committed to a National Housing and Homelessness Plan, which would be guided by a National Housing Supply and Affordability Council that sits in Housing Australia (in the National Housing Finance and Investment Corporation (NHVIC)).
- Both major parties focus on supporting Indigenous Home Ownership particularly States other than Victoria and a focus on Women and families fleeing domestic and family violence and older women.

- The Greens policy is high level: a Federal Housing Trust funded through tax revenue (from billionaires and large corporations) and a commitment of \$7B over ten years and 1 million affordable and public homes over 20 years.

Charter Councils undertook advocacy and activities in Homelessness week; however a joint media campaign was not undertaken in 2022.

A Charter website and resources are maintained by Monash Council. See [Homelessness and Social Housing Group Charter | City of Monash](#).

3.3 Research and reports

The foundational documents (inputs and outcomes of the 2019 CEO forum) and other research and reports are available on the Charter website. In 2022 the following reports and resources were completed.

Social Housing Needs in Melbourne’s East and South East

Knox Council applied their [tool and methodology](#) for assessing current and future social housing needs to the 13 Charter councils, finding that the social housing needs in Melbourne’s east and south east in 2021 were for 41,610 social/affordable private rentals. The capacity to meet this lower cost rental housing need in 2021 was 65%, meaning a shortage of 14,610. This shortage is projected to increase to 24,740 by 2041 unless 1,240 additional social housing/affordable private rentals are delivered annually

MAV / Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) Local Government Resources

The Charter Group was represented on the CHIA/MAV Affordable Housing Reference Group that developed a range of resources for councils seeking to use council land and / or planning agreements to secure affordable housing. They include a project report and fact sheets, including detail about s173 Agreements; using council or leased land; lease templates; and guidance about affordable housing in the planning system. See [CHIA: Developing Community Housing Agreements](#)

3.4 Projects

The previous project driven approach was impacted by high turnover in Charter Champions and the advocacy needs associated with state and federal elections, Charter, MAV Position and reforms to planning and rating.

The project approach will be re-activated in 2023 with a particular focus on the emerging Planning project being led by Bayside Council. Alongside that project a focus on data needs and access towards regional targets is also recommended. For each, a project scope, lead council and supporting councils and partners will be identified.

Project	Scope	Lead and supporting councils	Activities and outcomes
Communications Plan	Stakeholder identification, communication and engagement plan Develop shared messages and collateral Prepare media packs and Mayoral briefings; Induction Packs for Councillors	Monash Mornington & Bayside	Commenced and ongoing - as required
Charter Glossary	Develop consistent definitions for key terms (e.g. social housing, homelessness) for use in advocacy and policy development	Mornington Peninsula Whitehorse, Bayside & Knox	Complete
Opportunities Scan	Identify the partners, networks and complementary agendas the Charter needs to collaborate with, including for stimulus funding opportunities Engage with networks to collate a pipeline of potential projects and sites, from preliminary to ‘shovel ready’.	Casey Mornington Peninsula, Monash, Bayside, Yarra Ranges & Cardinia	Commenced Stalled with proposed rates exemption
Housing First for People Sleeping Rough	Coordinate a multi-agency response to ensure ‘Housing First’ transition for rough sleepers in the south and east	Greater Dandenong Mornington Peninsula, Maroondah, Kingston, Bayside & Frankston	Complete

Inclusionary Zoning Pilot	Scope and seek State Government support for IZ pilot in 2-3 activity centres in Melbourne's south and east	Monash Casey, Mornington Peninsula, Yarra Ranges, Cardinia, Manningham & Kingston, ERG	Superseded by proposed state-wide contribution - abandoned Planners' forum held
A consistent approach to measuring housing need	Expand EAHA needs analysis methodology across all Charter member councils Aggregate results to support regional planning and advocacy. monitor social housing supply against need, and rates of homelessness	Knox/EAHA Bayside, Casey, Mornington Peninsula	Complete
New:			
Supporting Affordable housing through Planning Schemes	Across various development contexts (strategic redevelopment sites, growth areas, and established areas) develop and promote a best practice / model justification, policy and contribution rate to support joint Planning Scheme Amendments	Bayside Manningham ERG Others tbc Note: CHIA development industry group involving MAV	Scoping stage
Data needs to support planning	To support social and land use planning a consistent methodology to demonstrate need, and improved access to national and state data sets are required for strategy development, service planning and coordination, and to explore regional targets.	Greater Dandenong Knox Frankston Casey EAHA Others tbc	Scoping stage

4. Looking forward - the year ahead

The federal election saw a change of government and a renewed focus on social and affordable housing.

The Productivity Commission 'In Need of Repair' report recommendations to address Australia's housing affordability problem and improve access to affordable, safe and sustainable housing is likely to inform the national reform agenda, National Plan and renewed NHHA, with greater federal/state collaboration and sharper targeting of assistance.

This is likely to have caused the delay to the release of the Victorian 10-year strategy, making the Compact (and Local Agreements) somewhat uncertain. While the state election result is unlikely to lead to fundamental changes, global factors have eroded and delayed the Big Housing Build.

Many of Homes Victoria's 2022 priorities remain priorities for 2023 - the BHB, Strategy and Compact, and regular engagement with Homes Victoria remains highly valued by Charter councils.

At a local level the compounding impacts of rate capping have been amplified by the global pandemic and inflation - constraining councils' capacity and forcing a focus on core services. Regional initiatives, collaboration and resource sharing are likely to become more important.

The Charter Group has raised its profile and broadened our engagement with the housing sector. With a strong foundation to build on in the years ahead, greater community understanding and support for SAH will assist and enable implementation. Communicating the need for and benefits of safe and affordable housing remains a priority. In this context, opportunities for the group to progress the Charter goals and improve the governance of the group are recommended in section 5.

5. Recommendations

The Charter Group will continue to involve Homes Victoria, MAV, Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) and the housing and development sector in Charter meetings and activities. We will reduce overlap and improve alignment with other groups such as the ICAHF and EAHA. We will strengthen our project approach and improve the support to new Charter Champions and expect active engagement in at least one workstream in return. A welcome pack and appointing a Champion **and** an alternate will improve continuity and better support Champions.

Three ‘project’ workstreams are proposed, each with a working group. Additional working groups will be set if needed:

1. Governance and Advocacy (Charter coordination group)

Minor changes to the Terms of Reference are proposed to reduce the number of meetings, allow for an alternate rep and to emphasise the need to actively contribute to working groups. This workstream would take responsibility to:

- plan and deliver quarterly meetings
- support engagement and on-boarding of Charter Champions and an alternate delegate
- develop an annual Communications Plan to support councils to share / coordinate activities (Homelessness week, Councillor briefings / induction; promotion of local initiatives (such as Frankston Zero))
- scope, explore council support and seek funding to deliver a coordinated community awareness campaign
- coordinate advocacy (e.g. for planning reforms, public awareness campaign) and submissions in response to opportunities (10-year strategy; National Plan; National Agreement; Compact)

In 2023 Monash Council will continue to provide executive support to the group.

2. Project: Data and the development of regional targets

A project to improve access to and consistency of data use; explore and seek formal agreement amongst Charter Councils for regional and sub-regional targets for social housing units; youth refuge; crisis accommodation etc. would enable:

- a consistent approach to measurement, monitoring and evaluation (for need, supply, diversity and proportion of households living in rental and mortgage stress)
- improved data sharing and aggregation (localised need, service support system gaps, effective responses)
- consistent approach to strategically justify changes to Planning Schemes

Data needs to support planning	<i>To support social and land use planning a consistent methodology to demonstrate need, and improved access to national and state data sets are required for strategy development, service planning and coordination, and to explore regional targets.</i>
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3. Project: Planning for a contribution towards Social and Affordable Housing

Continue to support Bayside to develop a methodology and progress a multi-council amendment to planning schemes to increase contributions towards SAH (essential community infrastructure). This workstream could also assist to:

- site identification - local, state, public, private
- collate Charter Councils’ activity towards scoping land and track progress (a ‘regional pipeline’?)
- support engagement with providers to better address local and regional needs
- share examples about Council negotiations with developers, identification of land, and practical insights about these processes from a tactical and statutory perspective

Supporting Affordable housing through Planning Schemes	<i>Across various development contexts (strategic redevelopment sites, growth areas, and established areas) develop and promote a best practice / model justification, policy and contribution rate to support joint Planning Scheme Amendments</i>
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It is recommended that the Charter Champions endorse 3 workstreams, updated Terms of Reference and provide this report to their CEO, Council and housing sector stakeholders. Charter Champions should also identify which workstream they would like to convene or join.

TERMS OF REFERENCE - Charter Group Implementation (Feb 2023)



Regional Local Government Homelessness & Social Housing Group Charter

Hosting Council: Monash Council

Chair: Fee Harrison, Manager Community Strengthening, Monash Council

Deputy Chair: vacant

Secretariat: Monash Council

Website: [Homelessness and Social Housing Group Charter](#) | [City of Monash](#).

Background

In November 2019, CEOs and executive staff representing 13 Eastern and South-Eastern Councils came together in a forum focused on homelessness and social housing hosted by Monash Council. Since then, a Charter detailing a unified, local government response to homelessness and advocacy for reform to increase the supply of social housing across Victoria was developed. As at August 2020, the Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter has been endorsed by 13 councils.

The Charter identifies three points of leverage for local government action towards systemic change to increase the supply of permanent, safe, appropriate and timely housing for our most vulnerable community members, and to embed housing first as a key foundational principle. The Councils represent more than 2 million residents. Over one-third of Victorians experiencing homelessness live in this region. The Councils are united in propelling an improved homelessness policy-setting and service sector through advocacy, research and projects to give effect to the Charter.

Purpose

The purpose of this group is to represent the 13 Councils and their Chief Executive Officers (CEO) to enact the principles, purpose and regional commitments of the Charter.

Membership

- A charter 'champion' and alternate nominated by the CEO of each Charter Council (13 Eastern & South-East Councils: Bayside, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston, Dandenong, Knox, Kingston, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Mornington Peninsula, Whitehorse & Yarra Ranges)
- Charter Partners:
 - Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG)
 - Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA)
 - Greater South East Metro Councils (GSEM)
 - Municipal Association of Victoria
 - Homes Victoria, in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing

Governance, Reporting & Resourcing

- A host council is agreed annually. From January 2023 - January 2024, Monash Council will lead the governance and coordination of the Charter Group meetings.
- Agenda and minutes to be circulated by Monash Council to members with input by all members.
- Acknowledgement of Country and the traditional owners of the land in all meetings and literature produced by the Group.

- Project and Charter Group activity will be driven by working groups that will convene as required and report progress regularly to the broader Charter Group. Member councils will actively contribute to **at least one** working group each year.
- Each project will be led by a different working group made up of several councils who will convene and report progress to the broader Charter Group.
- Councils support to the Charter is made by way of in-kind contributions and staff time.

Term of Group

- Ongoing, with annual review

Meeting Schedule

- Meetings to be held every quarter. Meetings are scheduled for the year ahead on ZOOM.
- The meeting schedule is as follows -
 - Meeting 1, Thursday 16 February 2023, 10am – 11.30am
 - Meeting 2, Thursday 18 May 2023, 10am – 11.30am
 - Meeting 3, Thursday 17 August 2023, 10am – 11.30am
 - Meeting 4, Thursday 16 November 2023, 10am – 11.30am

Scope

The scope of the Charter Group will be to develop an annual workplan and to coordinate regional implementation and reporting of the Charter, including in each Council's respective strategic policies and planning moving forward. The Charter Group may explore opportunities for external funding to support Charter implementation.

Quorum

- All member Councils must be represented at each meeting. Decision-making is by consensus.

Role of Members

- To attend each meeting and contribute to the implementation of the Charter through active involvement in a working group, information sharing and initiating and leading activities
- To coordinate with their CEO and council teams to ensure:
 - appropriate skills, knowledge and data are contributed to Charter activities;
 - communications and advocacy align and support Charter implementation;
 - the process for signing of any joint submissions the Charter Group leads or is invited to respond to
- To regularly update the CEO and report on progress, including a Charter implementation report to a public Council meeting, detailing local and regional progress and activity at least annually
- To encourage CEOs, elected representatives and housing sector partners to attend the annual Charter Forum
- To seek to implement the goals and commitments of the Charter through relevant Council strategies and plan development including Council Plan, Municipal Public Health & Wellbeing Plan and other plans and policies that address homelessness and social housing.

Priorities

- Progression of the Charter goals through regular meetings, annual forum, targeted briefings and webinars
- Active engagement with key stakeholders including State Government officials, MAV and project partners
- Ongoing Charter implementation and integration into key council documents
- Annual review and report; Determination of state-wide engagement and take-up of the Charter's agenda and identification of long-term ownership of Charter
- Align advocacy to the Federal Government and Victorian State Government

Attachment 2: Background and Charter

Background

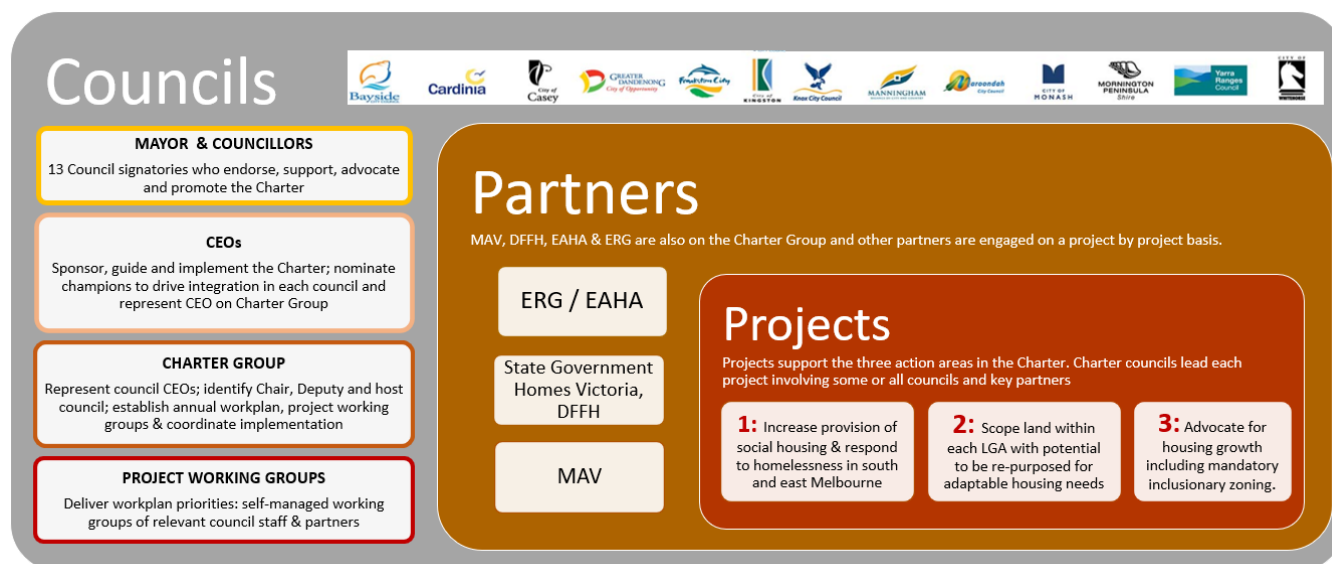
Over one-third of Victorians experiencing homelessness live in the Charter region.

In November 2019, CEOs and executive staff came together to discuss increasing levels of homelessness and the need for more affordable housing. They agreed to develop a Charter to foster a more effective homelessness response and increase the supply of social housing.

The Charter has been endorsed by 13 councils in Melbourne’s east and south east - an area with over two million residents. The Charter Group comprises Bayside, Casey, Cardinia, Frankston, Greater Dandenong, Kingston, Knox, Manningham, Maroondah, Monash, Mornington Peninsula, Whitehorse and Yarra Ranges councils. Monash Council is the sponsor and convenor of the group, and Dr Andi Diamond, CEO is spokesperson. Councils are represented by their CEOs, who delegate to a nominated ‘Charter Champion’.

Charter partners support the work of the Charter Group. They include the Municipal Association of Victoria (MAV), Homes Victoria in the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing (DFFH), the Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance (EAHA), the Eastern Region Group of Councils (ERG) and the Greater South-East Melbourne Group of Councils (GSEM).

The Charter’s governance arrangements are described in the following diagram:



The Charter

The [Regional Local Government Homelessness and Social Housing Charter \(Charter\)](#) details a unified, local government response to homelessness and advocacy to increase social housing across Victoria and embed a housing first approach.

The Charter identifies three shared priorities for local governments’ advocacy, research and project efforts. They are:

1. Work in partnership with federal and state government, public and private sector partners to coordinate our approach and deliver meaningful outcomes to increase the provision of social housing and respond to homelessness in south and east Melbourne
2. Scope land within each LGA that has the potential to be re-purposed for adaptable housing needs, and share these insights on a regional scale with the intention of identifying suitable sites for the development of social housing
3. Advocate for inclusive housing growth, including through mandatory inclusionary zoning.

A workplan was developed in 2020 and a project approach was taken to engage councils in the work of the group.

Attachment 3: Acknowledgements (to be updated)

The Charter Group acknowledges and thanks the following people and organisations for their active participation:

CHARTER COUNCILS, CEOs and CHARTER CHAMPIONS (2022)

- **Bayside Council:** Mick Cummins, CEO; Nick Bunney, Charter Champion
- **Cardinia Shire Council:** Carol Jeffs, CEO; Megan Gill, Charter Champion
- **Casey City Council:** Glenn Patterson, CEO; Sebastian Cunningham, Charter Champion
- **Greater Dandenong City Council:** John Bennie, CEO; Peter Johnstone, Charter Champion
- **Frankston City Council:** Phil Cantillon, CEO; Rachel Masters, Charter Champion, Coordination and Leadership Group
- **Kingston City Council:** Tim Tamlin, CEO; Paul Marsden ((Mathieu Maugueret), Charter Champion
- **Knox City Council:** Bruce Dobson, CEO; Petrina Dodds-Buckley, Charter Champion
- **Manningham City Council:** Andrew Day, CEO; Gabrielle O'Halloran & Felicity Raper, Charter Champion
- **Maroondah City Council:** Steve Kozlowski, CEO; Grant Meyer, Charter Champion
- **Mornington Peninsula Shire Council:** John Baker CEO; Roslyn Franklin, Charter Champion, Deputy Chair and CHIA project representative
- **Monash City Council:** Dr Andi Diamond, CEO; Fee Harrison, Charter Champion and Chair with Marian Nicholls, Charter Coordination and Leadership Group
- **Whitehorse City Council:** Simon McMillan, CEO; Debbie Seddon & Narelle Algie, Charter Champion
- **Yarra Ranges Shire Council:** Tammi Rose, CEO; Corinne Bowen, Charter Champion

PARTNERS & STAKEHOLDERS ENGAGED IN CHARTER GROUP MEETINGS

- CHIA
- ERG: Liz Johnstone
- GSEM: Danial Maltar
- HOMES VICTORIA: Hannah Duncan-Jones, Director Strategic Partnerships | Strategic Housing Policy, Andrew Read
- MAV / ICAHF: Jan Black, John Smith

FAREWELLS

Deputy Chair, and long-standing supporter Ros Franklin, Mornington Peninsula Shire Council

Attachment 4: Council Plan commitments and measures

	Council Plan	H&WB Plan	Affordable Housing Strategy	Data used, Goals and measures/indicators
Bayside	Yes	Yes	Yes Affordable Housing Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upcoming 2021 Census data (compared to 2016) - Unmet need for AH: 1,028 households (calculated by i.d Consultants using ABS Estimating Homelessness 2016 and ABS Census 2016) - No set targets for actions - Strategic Indicator for Council Plan drawn from Annual Community Satisfaction Survey is: <p><i>GOAL: Community satisfaction with Council's advocacy for increasing the supply of SAH in Bayside</i> <i>MEASURE: Maintain or improve Good rating (6.5-7.25)</i></p>
Cardinia	Yes	Yes	Yes Social & Affordable Housing Strategy & Action Plan 2018-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upcoming 2021 Census data (compared to 2016) - Housing Monitor Tool (Housing.id) by i.d Consultants. - Data derived from Council's Liveability Plan Annual Review process, including annual Liveability Survey <p><i>GOAL & MEASURE: Increase in the number of SAH properties committed to between 2017-2025.</i></p>
Casey	Yes	No	Yes Affordable Housing Strategy (2020-24)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Upcoming 2021 Census data (compared to 2016) - Unmet need for AH: 5,500 households (10,200 by 2041) calculated by i.d Consultants - Updated HomeTrack housing market data (2018 data used). <p><i>GOAL: Increase of affordable and social housing in Casey</i> <i>MEASURE: completion of the actions (and measures) of the Strategy to support this.</i></p>
Frankston	Yes	Yes	Yes Strategic Housing and Homelessness Alliance 5-Year Strategic Plan Integrated Housing Strategy and Action Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proportion of households living in rental and mortgage stress – ABS Census - Proportion of housing that is affordable, rental and sales – Housing Monitor - Estimated homelessness count – ABS Census <p><i>GOAL: Enhanced liveability through access to and revitalisation of Frankston City's places and spaces.</i> <i>MEASURE: tbd - Will work out outputs for these based on available external datasets and what departments collect</i></p>
Greater Dandenong	Yes	NA*	Council Plan includes a high level social & affordable housing action.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Maintain a system for annually recording the volume, structure and location of new dwellings - Monitor the delivery of all new housing in Greater Dandenong over 5 year intervals <i>(checking with statistician re what datasets are used)</i>
Kingston	Yes	Yes	Yes Social & Affordable Housing Plan, 2020 Strategic objective in the Council Plan 2021-2025. Healthy and Well Action Plan 2019-2021	<p>GOALS & MEASURES:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increased % of SAH to meet existing demand. - Delivery of a range of affordable housing ownership options, including built-to-rent, shared equity etc... - Decrease of homelessness within the municipality - Decrease in number of households experiencing housing stress - Number of new social and community housing dwellings approved

Knox	Yes	NA*	Yes Social & Affordable Housing Strategy & Action Plan (2022-27).	GOALS: <i>A greater mix of housing to meet different needs</i> <i>Reduced homelessness</i>
Manningham	Yes	Yes	Yes Affordable Housing Policy and Action Plan 2010-2020	- Upcoming 2021 Census data (compared to 2016) - Data derived from Community Panel discussions and investigation.
Maroondah	Yes	Yes	Yes Affordable & Social Housing Policy (2018-2026) Need for affordable housing referenced within community vision, and Liveability, Wellbeing & Resilience Strategy (i.e. H&WB Plan)	- A number of key tactical outcome-based indicators have been selected linked to each of the six focus areas in the H&WB Plan. Of relevance: GOAL & MEASURE: <i>Household stress - % of Maroondah households in the lowest 40% of incomes who are paying more than 30% of their usual gross weekly income on housing costs</i>
Monash	Yes	Yes	Yes Draft Monash Affordable Housing Strategy 2020	- Dedicated outreach support for people in Monash experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness GOALS & MEASURES: <i>Increased social housing stock</i> <i>Increased community awareness of the value of social housing from a human rights perspective measured through Monash Community Satisfaction Survey</i> <i>Community engagement with the communications campaign.</i>
Mornington Peninsula	Yes	NA*	Community Vision released which will guide the Plan.	- Develop opportunities for affordable housing throughout the Peninsula - Maintain and develop infrastructure to support the ideals of community wellbeing, sustainability and innovation.
Whitehorse	Yes	Yes	No Affordable housing advocacy in Council Plan; two strategies address this issue. H&WB Plan recognises affordable housing as one of many priorities.	- 3.4.1: Participation in Eastern Affordable Housing Alliance and Regional Local Government Homelessness and social Housing Charter Group - 3.4.2: Number of SAH developed in partnership with developers (MEASURE)
Yarra Ranges	Yes	Yes	No Scattered through a number of priority areas and supported in community survey. Guidelines for Housing and Homelessness outline at a high level what Council will do.	- Census significantly under-estimated homelessness in YR. - The AIHW data on specialist services clients is better MEASURES: <i>Number of new social housing dwellings.</i> <i>Number of referrals made by Council.</i>
		* H&WP integrated in Council Plan.		

Updated January 2023

Attachment 5: Charter Group Outcomes

100% of Charter Councils have integrated social and affordable housing objectives in key council plans

From 62% in 2019, 100% of the Charter Group councils have integrated social and affordable housing objectives in key council planning documents such as Council Plans and Municipal Public Health and Wellbeing Plans. Local Housing Strategies are being prepared. These are detailed at Attachment 4.

- Over half of councils specifically reference the Charter
- While a few councils use strong / active language (provide assistance to, plan for, invest in, develop) most language used is generally passive (engage, promote, encourage)

The Homes Victoria Big Housing Build creates opportunities and challenges

The Charter Group welcomed the Big Housing Build and 100% of councils valued engagement with Homes Victoria. Joint submissions and technical support for project delivery, as well as engagement were opportunities that the Charter Group enabled. The Group also assists councils to engage with the property and development sectors.

- Less than half of councils were yet to brief council on the Big Housing Build, engage the development sector or to identify potential sites.
- Almost 80% of councils were concerned about the proposed rates exemption for social housing and a reduced planning role for councils. These concerns have been passed on to Homes Victoria directly and through the MAV.
- Over 70% of councils recognised the risk to implementation of community resistance / misperceptions around social housing

Engagement with the homelessness service sector and community housing providers has increased

Through the CEO forum, and direct involvement in Charter Group meetings and through projects, councils have expanded their engagement beyond their local homelessness services and housing providers.

- Almost 70% of councils had commenced discussions with housing agencies

Guidance and support for councils' homelessness responses has improved.

Led by Greater Dandenong, a literature review, benchmarking and council input were used to develop a guide. The guide supports councils to understand and apply Housing First and human rights principles to homelessness responses and establish a whole-of-Council approach.

- Local government responses to people sleeping rough are explored, evaluated, documented and shared
- The practice guide allows Councils to reflect on their current practice, identify strengths that can be shared and the areas that would benefit from further work.

There is a better understanding of housing need across the Charter Group region

With the support of Knox Council, an assessment of social housing need across the region has been completed which will be updated as census data becomes available.

- Half of the housing vulnerable households in the Charter region are families with children, and of these, most are one parent families
- 41,610 households need access to social housing or affordable private rentals. The current shortage is estimated at 14,950 dwellings in 2021 which is projected to increase to 25,260 by 2041.
- The region's capacity to meet lower cost rental housing need in 2021 is only 64%. Each year an additional 1,260 social housing or affordable private rentals are required to meet forecast need.