

In Summary:

- Explore other options than the conventional unit/house solution
 - Multigenerational housing so old and young people can support each other
 - High-rise building complexes that include living areas, shops, offices, schools, gym, swimming pool surrounded by parkland with play areas for children, picnic spots, exercise areas and communal gardens
 - Negotiating with local government to allow different approaches to building regulations including the use of different building materials
- Consulting with local government regarding risks such as fire and flooding and making this research available to private developers free of charge
- Requiring that new accommodation be energy efficient and has taken risks of fire and flood into account.
 - Ensure that the Aurora system for accepting solar energy from home panels into the grid is not a disincentive to this type of development
- Building animal overpasses to reduce impact on endangered species
- Financial assistance to first home builders (not buyers)
- Rent to buy schemes and increase in rent allowance for pensioners
- Use existing programs such as Youth Arc and Colony 47 to reach homeless youths
- Bring in a cap on return on investment rather than a rent cap, thereby encouraging private investors to maintain and improve their properties.
- Bring in incentives such as dollar-for-dollar assistance for improving energy efficiency in rental housing (e.g., putting in Electric Continuous Flow hot water systems, insulation and replacing loose windows)
- Use education and discussion groups to increase acceptance of social housing in different neighbourhoods
- Ensure any new developments have adequate infrastructure and services – negotiate with Metro and bring in incentives for small businesses to start up such services as the traditional corner shop
- Analysis of current trends; exploring alternative living arrangements; planning for change
- For emergency aid, use “pop-up” housing solutions or prefabricated units that can be quickly deployed. All layers of government should have quick access to these stockpiles.
- Explore alternative living areas for people who are now living in unviable areas

FOCUS AREAS

What additional interventions could governments consider to improve housing affordability?

Increase the rent allowance for pensioners

What scope is there to increase the role of the private and community sectors in improving housing affordability?

The proposal seems to have several approaches – helping people buy/build new houses, helping investors buy/build rental properties and improving the efficient use of the current housing portfolio.

However, land is in short supply and likely to be under increasing pressure as some areas become unviable due to climate change. Also land usage for housing can be detrimental to the survival of endangered species and tree clearing is probably not a good idea.

It is possible that one solution is to build up rather than out. High rise buildings have a bad reputation but properly designed could be a viable option. If the buildings were designed with shopping facilities on the floor level, and include a swimming pool and gym, with offices and possibly a school in the same building or cluster of buildings, energy use (for travel e.g.) could be reduced. If the building was surrounded by parklands that included exercise areas, play areas for children and a communal garden, people could have a very high standard of living.

What other issues would you like to be considered regarding housing affordability?

If you prevent investors from making money through their rental properties they will withdraw from this market, thereby increasing pressure on a short supply. So rent capping may not be a viable option.

Maybe, regulations could look at return on capital and cap that at a reasonable return (e.g., 15 or 20%). That way, they can only put rents up if they actually spend money on improving the property such as investing in renewable energy supplies, replacing old white goods and electrical equipment, investing in NBN connection, maintenance and upkeep of the property, etc.

Noting increased rental prices and decreased rental vacancies across Tasmania, what are some of the ways the challenges in the private rental sector, particularly around security of tenure, could be addressed?

It is usually more efficient to have plenty of choice in the system so people can work out arrangements that suit them. However, short term leases (6 months or less) can result in vulnerable people being shifted from place to place as rents increase beyond affordability.

Maybe there could be a regulation that rents can only be increased once a year, so there is no incentive to have such short-term leases. Most leases have plenty of provisions to evict tenants who are behaving badly so having longer leases should not pose a problem.

How could the effects of the short-stay accommodation industry on the rental sector be managed into the future?

Invest in more purpose-built short stay accommodation (hotels, BNB, backpackers) and restrict the number of short-stay homes to a bare minimum.

FOCUS AREA 2 – HOUSING SUPPLY

Discussion Questions

What must be considered to make sure new housing meets diverse needs into the future?

Environmental concerns – taking into account climate change to avoid building in areas at high risk of flooding and fire

Multi-generational housing – enabling families to live together across generations so old people are not living alone but can live with young people who want to leave the parental home, or adult children can live with older parents, or young adults can live with their parents in harmony. This would include separate kitchen areas and living areas but some communal rooms. Local government would have to be involved with this idea.

How can housing supply respond rapidly to changing social and economic environments?

Analysis of current trends; exploring alternative living arrangements; planning for change
For emergency aid, use “pop-up” housing solutions or prefabricated units that can be quickly deployed. All layers of government should have quick access to these stockpiles.

Explore alternative living areas for people who are now living in unviable areas

What additional interventions could governments consider to improve housing supply?

Explore the option of allowing current renters to “rent to buy” over a specified period with interest cost and consequence of non-payment of mortgage rent clearly outlined

Bring in a minimum standard of energy efficiency for rental housing

What other interventions could improve housing supply?

Liaise with local government regarding building regulations with a view to allowing alternative building approaches to become possible

What can be done to further improve planning processes in Tasmania, particularly in the context of the delivery of social and affordable housing and increased density via infill development?

Major problem with new developments is the lack of infrastructure and local services, particularly public transport and the traditional corner shop. Many of the people who move into social housing are low income and do not have access to a car. If the nearest shop is a two hour walk away, it adds reduces the convenience of the cheap housing (Look for example at the Glenlusk area, which has been settled for several decades but still has no regular bus service, the shopping area is at the bottom of a steep hill and only one "corner shop" in Mary's Hope Road).

So, planning should include liaison with local government and Metro regarding possibilities of supplying food service licences and transport options.

Take into account wildlife concerns and plan to build animal overpasses in vulnerable areas

What scope is there to increase the role of private developers and local government in improving housing supply?

A role model could be developed which offers private developers and local government incentives to invest in an area. These incentives could be such things as dollar-for-dollar match in investment, solutions to infrastructure developments, surveys of environmental and discussions of risk factors such as flooding and fire.

How can we bring whole communities along to promote the benefits of social and affordable housing in local areas

Demonstrate to local communities the benefits of social and affordable housing in their area (e.g., increased services)

Education and discussion groups

SUSTAINABLE HOUSING

Discussion Questions

What actions are needed to improve sustainability of housing?

Build houses in safe areas.

Avoid building across animal migration or grazing paths

If necessary, build animal overpasses so there is less roadkill (refer Banff, Canada, animal overpasses)

Build for flexibility

Build for energy efficiency

Have communal gardens and tool libraries in more remote areas

What Government assistance programs could help young people and people with changed life circumstances access affordable home ownership?

Places like Youth Arc and Colony 47 are excellent first points of contact and could be used as a conduit for any existing or new assistance packages.

What can be done to improve the energy efficiency of existing and new homes?

Tasmania has a good program to encourage the use of solar panels but apparently Aurora does not adequately reward owners for this forward thinking. That needs to be addressed.

Bring in minimum standards of insulation and white good efficiency in rental houses

Require all rental properties to instal Electric Continuous Flow hot water systems

What else can be done by stakeholders to improve sustainability?

Offer financial assistance to first home builders (not buyers) so they can afford energy efficient items such as good insulation, efficient heating and double-glazed windows