ALGA Australian Local Government Association

Housing Australia

Australian Community Housing

Guide for Local Councils

The Delivery of Affordable Housing

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Contents

Our team would like to pay our respects to our ancestors and Elders, past and present who are our knowledge holders. We acknowledge our Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander young people who are our future leaders. We acknowledge and pay respect to those who have gone before and recognise their deep and lasting contributions.

Introduction

Australia is facing a national housing crisis, with demand outpacing supply having a significant impact on housing accessibility and affordability across the country. In response, all levels of government are exploring new mechanisms to combat this, including increases to the supply of social and affordable housing.

Local governments are increasingly identifying opportunities to support housing outcomes, through land, planning support, and partnerships, alongside state and federal efforts. While not mandated to deliver housing, councils may seek to play a meaningful role where it aligns with community priorities and capacity.

We acknowledge that this report was made possible with the support of Housing Australia. It aims to assist councils in understanding and navigating their potential role in delivering affordable housing. The guide outlines a range of practical measures and processes that councils can adopt to help achieve this goal.

It provides practical insights and strategies to help councils build partnerships, access funding, and contribute meaningfully to housing outcomes.

Prior consultation and engagement

To inform the development of this guide Australia Community Housing (ACH) and the Australian Local Government Association (ALGA) worked together to gather insights from across the sector.

This included a national survey of local councils to understand:

- current affordable housing activity and initiatives
- key barriers to council involvement
- existing relationships with Community Housing Providers (CHPs)
- areas where councils seek further guidance or support.

In addition to this consultation, the guide draws on existing research and evidence, including work by Community Housing Industry Association (CHIA) NSW that explores the various ways local councils are already delivering affordable housing. These are referenced in Section 3 of this report.

Purpose of this Guide

What is this Guide for?

This document is intended to be a guide only, and councils will still need to work within the legislative boundaries as set by state and territory governments. This guide is designed to help you (as local government professionals) and your council better understand the different ways local governments can support the delivery of affordable housing. It gives you a practical overview of the tools available, from less intensive interventions to more involved delivery, and how other councils have used them to deliver on the ground results.

This document will help you:

- see the full range of delivery options at a community's disposal
- learn what has worked in other councils through real case studies
- understand what kinds of resources or partnerships you'll need
- figure out what lever(s) might be right for your council.

Context and Intent

We've built this as a practical guide. It is not a policy, legal or financial manual. It's not designed to give you detailed statutory planning advice, technical feasibility assessments, or definitive interpretations of land law. This is intended to be only a first step in the journey in which you will need to bring in specialist support to assist along the way.

How this guide fits into the bigger picture?

This guide is part of a broader initiative supporting communities to access social and affordable housing.

To support the guide's implementation, ALGA held an event featuring a panel discussions. This explored the guide's key themes, offer practical insights, and encourage dialogue around local challenges and opportunities.

What to do next?

When you've finished reading this guide, your next steps might be to:

- identify the most effective ways your council can support delivery of community housing stock
- starting internal conversations (whether you're a staff member briefing councillors, or a councillor engaging with your community or local CHPs) about what's involved, why it matters, and what challenges might arise.
- look at the common hurdles other councils have faced and how they've tackled them, and see what might work for you
- spot any knowledge gaps in your team and make use of the tools and resources that are available to help.

What is included in this Guide?

This guide walks you through the different ways councils can support the delivery of affordable housing, from light-touch advocacy all the way to direct development. We've grouped these into five key levers, ordered by the level of capital and involvement typically required.

Section 1 provides a snapshot of what councils told us through the national survey, offering insights into current affordable housing activity, the common challenges councils are facing, and the types of support they've identified as most needed. This helps to establish a shared understanding of where we are now, and reinforces that councils are not alone in navigating these issues.

Section 2 provides a deeper look at each potential council lever available to councils to support the delivery of affordable housing. For each one, you'll find:

- practical detail on how it works
- what conditions you'll need in place to make it work
- a council case study showing what it looks like in action.

This structure is designed to help you get oriented quickly, dive deeper into areas you're interested in, and bring real-world insight into your next housing conversation.

In Section 3, you'll find additional tools and tables to help guide you in the use of various levers.

What is Affordable Housing?

Affordable housing refers to housing that is suitable for low to moderate income households and priced so that these households can also meet other essential living costs, such as food, transport, healthcare, and education.

A commonly accepted benchmark is that housing is affordable when it costs less than 30% of gross household income for households in the lowest 40% of income distribution.

In practice, affordable rental housing is often provided at a discount of at least 20–25% below market rent. For example, some providers set rents at no more than 75% of the prevailing market rate, ensuring tenants are not placed in housing stress and can maintain a decent standard of living.

Affordable housing is also vital to support essential workers on lower incomes — for example nurses, teachers, aged care staff, and emergency personnel—whose roles underpin community safety, wellbeing, and continuity of services. When considering housing affordability, it's equally Important to examine housing diversity.

We're in this together

Shared Purpose, Shared Challenges

In exploring how councils can support affordable housing, it's essential to recognise the role of Community Housing Providers (CHPs). CHPs are not just service providers, they are long-standing, not-for-profit mission-driven organisations with deep expertise in delivering housing for those most in need. When councils and CHPs work together, they bring complementary strengths to the table:

- councils with their local knowledge, planning powers, and community trust
- CHPs with their housing delivery capability, tenant support services, and sector experience.

While their roles may differ, councils and CHPs share a striking number of similarities. Both are deeply committed to improving community wellbeing, both operate under significant resource constraints, and both must navigate policy and funding environments largely shaped by state and federal governments. They are on the front lines of social need, responding to complex challenges with limited tools. Recognising this shared ground is the first step toward building stronger, more effective partnerships, and shifting the narrative from critique to collaboration.

The following graphic highlights the shared purposes and shared challenges CHPs and local councils face.

	Mission-driven to serve communities	**Maximising impact with available resources**	**Deep understanding of local and community needs**	**Responsive to policy and funding environments**	**Able to access diverse funding sources**	**Long-term social impact focus**
Local Councils	Councils exist to support the wellbeing, safety, and prosperity of their local communities through services, infrastructure, and advocacy.	Councils work strategically within budget constraints to deliver essential services and invest in community wellbeing.	Councils often play a key role in addressing local issues like mental health and social inclusion, and while some engage directly with homelessness, formal responsibility lies with state and territory governments.	Council decisions are shaped by broader policy and funding settings, requiring adaptability and strategic alignment.	Councils pursue funding opportunities to support infrastructure and innovation, often leveraging partnerships to strengthen proposals.	Councils aim to create inclusive, resilient communities through long-term planning and investment in social infrastructure.
Community Housing Providers	CHPs are dedicated to providing safe, secure, and affordable housing to vulnerable populations, with a strong focus on social impact and tenant wellbeing.	CHPs optimise limited resources to meet growing housing demand, often innovating to deliver high-quality housing and support services.	CHPs work closely with tenants and support services, often dealing with complex social challenges and providing housing solutions to meet some of these challenges.	CHPs are not-for-profit organisations that operate within policy and funding frameworks set by government, and adapt their strategies to align with changing priorities.	CHPs access a range of funding sources, including government programs, private finance, and philanthropic support, to deliver housing outcomes.	CHPs invest in stable housing as a foundation for long-term wellbeing, economic participation, and community cohesion.

Section 1: Current state of the market

National Survey Insights What councils told us

A national survey was distributed to all local councils across Australia, with 117 councils (22%) responding. The survey was conducted to better understand how local governments are engaging in the delivery of social and affordable housing. The survey explored barriers to participation, current levels of activity, and the types of support that would enable more effective collaboration between councils and CHPs. The findings reveal several persistent challenges, including gaps in awareness, capacity, and funding as well as clear areas where councils are seeking practical assistance to strengthen their role in housing delivery.

Theme 1: Awareness gaps are limiting access to funding

Despite growing interest in housing delivery, many councils remain unaware or underprepared to engage with available programs:

- one in five councils had never heard of Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)
- more broadly, 41% of councils reported never having participated in any government housing funding program.

These figures suggest that even councils facing acute housing need often lack the visibility, internal capacity, or institutional knowledge required to act on funding opportunities.

Theme 2: Land contributions are happening—but not without friction

More than half of surveyed councils reported using council-owned land to support affordable housing outcomes. However, these contributions are often complex and politically sensitive.

Councils cited very valid challenges such as internal resistance, valuation uncertainty, and concerns about "giving away" public assets. Even where land is available, activating it for housing typically requires dedicated staff time, legal structuring, and financial modelling—resources that many councils lack.

Theme 3: CHP partnerships exist—but are not always working

While 64% of councils reported having a relationship with a CHP, only 34% had collaborated on a joint project.

Councils described barriers such as unclear engagement pathways, mismatched expectations, and limited internal capacity to structure or manage formal agreements. Many expressed a need for model agreements, clearer governance frameworks, and practical guidance to support partnership development and delivery.

Theme 4: Councils know what support they need

Despite the barriers, councils were clear about the types of support that would help them play a more active role.

Top priorities included:

- funding for enabling infrastructure,
- clearer land contribution models,
- simplified grant processes, and
- improved partnership frameworks with CHPs.

Councils also called for training on legal, financial, and delivery models suited to the local government context, and for funding criteria that better reflect council capacity and constraints.

Survey Key Insights

Councils are currently engaging with affordable housing in different ways, depending on their context and capacity

60% prioritise affordable housing in their **Strategic Plan**

39% have developed a specific **Housing Plan**

25% have established **partnerships*** **with CHPs**

22% have **committed funding** towards housing projects

**An established partnership differs from a relationship or a collaboration as it assumes a formal, strategic alliances.*

64% reported having a **relationship with CHPS.** Only **34%** reported having done a joint project or **collaboration with a CHP**

The barriers councils experienced with the Housing Australia Future Fund highlight common challenges that many local governments face more broadly.

55% Lack of available **council capacity** to complete applications

53% Lack of **council expertise** in affordable housing delivery

42% have **insufficient funding** to contribute to affordable housing project

32% of councils raised concerns about **using council land,** citing community opposition, bureaucratic complexity, and financial pressure from ratepayers against low-cost land provision.

National Survey Insights Diverging needs & roles

The survey revealed that while councils across Australia share many of the same challenges, their roles, needs, and approaches to affordable housing vary significantly depending on geographic context. These differences have important implications for how support, funding, and partnerships should be structured.

Affordable housing ranked as higher priority by non-metro councils

Councils in regional and rural areas consistently rated affordable housing as a higher priority than their metropolitan counterparts. This reflects both the severity of local housing pressures and the limited presence of private market solutions. In many cases, councils see themselves as the only actor capable of initiating or enabling delivery.

CHP partnerships are more common in regional and rural councils but not always effective

Regional and rural councils are more likely to have formal relationships with CHPs, but also more likely to report barriers to effective collaboration. These include geographic distance, limited CHP presence, and a lack of shared delivery frameworks. Councils expressed a need for clearer partnership models and more consistent engagement from providers.

Delivery roles differ by geography, with non-metro councils participating more directly

Metropolitan councils are more likely to focus on enabling roles, such as planning, zoning, and policy reform, while regional and rural councils are more often directly involved in delivery. This includes contributing land, coordinating infrastructure, or leading funding bids. These roles are often taken on out of necessity, not preference.

Comfort with land use varies significantly, with metropolitan councils more reluctant to use council owned land

Councils in regional and rural areas reported higher levels of comfort using council-owned land for affordable housing, reflecting both a stronger perceived mandate and fewer alternative delivery pathways. Metropolitan councils, on the other hand, were more likely to express concern about probity, valuation, political optics, and the limited availability of land. In many cases, metro councils may also be hesitant to divest valuable assets due to competing priorities and higher land values, whereas non-metro councils often view land use as a practical necessity.

Infrastructure and capacity are constraints for regional and rural areas

While planning reform is often seen as the key lever in metro areas, regional and rural councils identified infrastructure gaps and limited internal capacity as the primary barriers to delivery.

While metropolitan councils often focus on planning reform, many also flagged infrastructure funding gaps and limited internal resources. Councils called for early-stage funding, support for enabling works, and tailored guidance that reflects their scale and capacity.

Survey Key Insights

Metropolitan councils primarily see their role in affordable housing as one of enabling delivery

Through planning provisions, policy settings, and social program support. In contrast, regional and rural councils are more likely to identify their role as one of direct involvement, including contributing land, coordinating infrastructure, and leading delivery efforts.

Where do you see the local government's most critical role in delivering social and affordable housing?

Role	Metro	Regional	Rural
Planning provision	81%	82%	78%
Direct involvement	29%	48%	56%
Social programs	57%	21%	22%
Trunk infrastructure	14%	30%	47%

50% of rural councils and **46%** of regional councils have used council-owned land for housing delivery. Only **14%** of metro councils reported using council-owned land.

Section 2: Local government affordable housing delivery options

Local government affordable housing delivery options

Councils should identify where they can best support, from advocacy through to direct development and ownership.

Councils across Australia are increasingly exploring how they can support affordable housing in response to local needs and broader system gaps. While local government is not the primary housing provider, councils can be well-placed to contribute.

Consultation revealed five broad levers that councils can use to support affordable housing; ranging from low-capital options like building support, through to direct delivery. While shown as a progression, you don't need to use every lever. You can pick and combine approaches that make sense for your council's context, resources, and goals.

However, it's often helpful to start with Lever 1: Building community support & strategic partnerships. This lays the groundwork, helping you build internal momentum, develop partnerships, and better understand your local housing landscape.

The preconditions row indicates whether community support, land, funding, planning authority, or partnerships are essential or merely beneficial.

Low Intervention Levers → *High Intervention Levers*

	1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	**2. Planning & policy levers**	**3. Financial incentives & subsidies**	**4. Land-based contributions**	**5. Direct delivery & ownership**
Description	Councils play a vital role in building support for affordable housing, not only within their communities, but also across government and industry.	Councils shape private development outcomes through planning policy.	Councils provide financial or in-kind support to improve project viability, primarily through one-off, transactional measures. These reduce costs for developers or CHPs but do not involve ongoing council control or asset ownership.	Councils use publicly owned land to enable affordable housing. These interventions often have the greatest impact — and carry the most strategic weight.	Councils take direct responsibility for development, ownership, of affordable housing.
Delivery mechanisms	a) **Strategic leadership and agenda-setting** b) **Community education and political support-building** c) **Stakeholder coordination**	a) **Affordable Housing Contribution Schemes** b) **Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs) and / or Planning incentives** c) **Streamlined DA approval** d) **Planning system settings**	a) **Fee waivers and reduced contributions** b) **Cash grants** c) **Enabling infrastructure contributions**	a) **Land sale –** transferring council land at a discounted or full value. b) **Land lease –** retaining ownership and leasing land under long-term arrangements.	a) **Acquisition of existing properties** b) **Council-led development**
Preconditions	**Community support** strengthens partnerships and influence. While not a technical requirement, it aligns with councils' role in serving their communities.	**Community support** is required **Partnering with Housing Provider** would be helpful but not essential **Private Sector Interest** Is essential for planning and policy levers to work effectively	**Community support** is required **Partnering with Housing Provider** would likely be required. **Private Sector Interest** Requires private sector see value in affordable housing delivery Council will need some **funding capacity** to deliver any financial incentive.	**Community support** is required **Partnering with Housing Provider** would likely be required Council may need some **funding capacity** to deliver Council would need **access to available land** to make this option feasible	**Community support** is required **Partnering with Housing Provider** would be beneficial & preferred Council will need the **funding capacity** to deliver Council would need **access to available land** to make this option feasible

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships

Councils can build momentum for housing by engaging communities and forging strategic partnerships

Overview

Councils play a leadership role in building support for affordable housing within their communities and across government. While they may not directly deliver housing, they can influence outcomes by coordinating stakeholders, setting strategic direction, and championing local needs.

Strong advocacy lays the groundwork for success. Councils that set clear priorities, build relationships, and pursue grants can enter project-level conversations with credibility. Community support grows when housing needs are well-understood, backed by strategies, and already being acted on.

Council actions are also shaped by state government requirements, which set the planning, funding and delivery framework. These can shift rapidly, requiring councils to adjust to remain compliant and aligned.

When to use this lever

This lever is most appropriate when:

- you are at early stages of engaging in housing delivery
- you do not own developable land
- you lack dedicated housing funding streams
- you are seeking to build organisational knowledge or community support.

This lever also applies to councils actively preparing for future higher-level interventions.

Survey insights: What councils are already doing

60% of councils surveyed said affordable housing is a priority in their strategic plans, with **39%** indicating they had specific housing plans developed.

When asked where do you see local government most critical role in delivering affordable housing, most responses indicated that local government main role was in advocacy and facilitation of partnerships rather than any direct involvement.

"Council's role is primarily facilitative — bringing parties together and pushing for appropriate policy settings."

Preconditions

Community support strengthens partnerships and influence. While not a technical requirement, it aligns with councils' role in serving their communities.

Delivery Mechanisms	Description	Example outputs
a) Strategic leadership	Positioning affordable housing as a policy priority in local strategic planning documents, broader community vision statements, or dedicated housing strategies.	Inclusion of affordable housing targets, published Affordable Housing Action Plan and Housing Strategies
b) Community education and political support	Building awareness and acceptance among residents and elected members to foster support for future delivery.	Local forums, explainer videos, myth-busting communication material; housing included as a standing agenda item.
c) Stakeholder coordination / facilitation role	Acting as a connector between CHPs, developers, government agencies, and other councils.	Regular engagement meetings, joint housing working groups, submission facilitation.
d) Government advocacy and funding mobilisation	Advocating to state and federal governments for policy reform, funding programs, or planning flexibility. Supporting or coordinating grant applications with CHPs. Peak bodies such as ALGA and state/territory Local Government Associations play a key role in amplifying council voices.	Joint funding submissions, state-level advocacy strategies, references in housing policy reform proposals or advocacy on renewal of existing concentrations of social housing.
e) Partnership activation	Moving from informal relationships with CHPs to formalised project partnerships. This involves identifying shared goals, aligning timelines, and developing governance or delivery frameworks to support joint action.	Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), joint project scoping documents, co-authored funding applications, or formalised delivery agreements.

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships

Councils can build momentum for housing by engaging communities and forging strategic partnerships

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits

- **Strategic values:** provides a structured starting point to define council's role and priorities and KPIs in housing and positions council to engage in more advanced interventions over time.
- **Resourcing and feasibility**: does not require capital or land, making it achievable for councils with limited financial resources. This can be progressed without formal delivery structures or development expertise.
- **Futureproofing**: improves readiness for future funding opportunities by clarifying intent and setting direction.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** helps foster stronger relationships with CHPs, developers, state agencies and the community demonstrates leadership and builds credibility as a housing facilitator.
- **Community and political benefit:** increases transparency and community awareness of housing needs and can build community support over time through education and engagement.
- **Delivery and long-term impact:** creates momentum for future housing initiatives by laying foundational work.

Key risks

- **Changing State requirements**: Rapid policy or legislative changes at state level can alter council priorities, resourcing needs and delivery timeframes, and may require strategy revisions.
- **Lack of implementation**: strategies or plans risk becoming symbolic if actions are not actively pursued or resourced.
- **Dependency on others:** outcomes rely on CHPs, state government and developers choosing to invest—council cannot deliver housing alone through advocacy.
- **Limited internal capacity:** many councils lack dedicated staff or budget to support relationship-building and strategic follow-through.
- **Reputational risk:** public commitments in strategies can damage credibility if progress is not reported or delivered.
- **Community resistance:** without early engagement, future housing projects may face opposition or delays.
- **Measurement challenges:** councils may struggle to track or demonstrate the impact of advocacy alone, making it harder to build political or financial support.

Pieces of the puzzle

1 Establish a strategic position & KPIs

- *Include affordable housing in the Community Strategic Plan, or similar policy.*
- *Adopt or update a local housing strategy or action plan to identify needs and define objectives.*

2 Develop a housing strategy

- *Outline priority actions, such as land audits, stakeholder engagement or advocacy targets.*
- *Ensure the strategy reflects current State requirements.*

3 Build internal capability

- *Identify and support a team or officer to coordinate housing initiatives, where possible.*
- *In smaller or regional councils, this role may be led by the CEO or senior leadership due to limited staffing.*
- *Allocate staff time or apply for state-supported capability-building programs.*

4 Engage stakeholders and build partnerships

- *Map relevant stakeholders (CHPs, local developers, advocacy groups, state departments).*
- *Convene a local housing working group or regular round tables.*
- *Act as a connector between parties to explore joint opportunities.*

5 Educate and engage the community

- *Run information sessions, workshops or online engagement tools.*
- *Publish explainers or FAQs on affordable housing.*

6 Advocate to state and federal government

- *Make formal submissions to government reviews, programs or legislation.*
- *Seek support for enabling infrastructure or flexible funding.*
- *Join sector-wide advocacy efforts through regional alliances*

CASE STUDY Shoalhaven City Council, NSW

Background & key challenges

In 2017, Shoalhaven City Council kicked off its Affordable Housing Strategy to respond to rising housing stress—with over 4,000 households experiencing stress, and more than 2,000 in need of affordable options.

At the time, the council faced a few common roadblocks:

- **Limited developable land:** The council did not own significant parcels of land suitable for housing development.
- **Resource constraints:** There weren't dedicated funding streams or internal capacity to take on delivery directly.
- **Community opposition**: Early efforts hit pushback from locals concerned about the impact of affordable housing.

Initial role: Building support & partnerships

To get started, the council leaned into what it could influence through strategy and coordination:

- **Strategic planning:** Developed and adopted the Affordable Housing Strategy, setting clear objectives and identifying potential actions.
- **Stakeholder engagement:** Collaborated with Southern Cross Community Housing (SCCH) and other stakeholders to align efforts and build partnerships.
- **Community engagement:** Conducted forums and information sessions to educate the community and build support for affordable housing initiatives.

Key outcomes

Shoalhaven City Council's *Affordable Housing Strategy* combined high-level directions—such as rezoning and advocacy to state government—with practical, place-based actions. These included the dedication of council-owned land at Coomea Street in Bomaderry for affordable housing development, as well as the identification of other potential council and publicly owned sites for future delivery.

Importantly, once land was allocated, the council was better positioned to partner with a local CHPs and unlock funding from multiple sources, including the Council, the NSW Government, and the CHP itself.

This is a good example of how you can start with building support networks (Lever 1) and move toward more delivery-oriented levers.

Project details

Location Coomea Street, Bomaderry, NSW	**Number of dwellings** 39 affordable houses
Initiated 2017	**Completed** 2024
Delivered by: Southern Cross Community Housing	**Managed by:** Southern Cross Community Housing
Land provided by: Shoalhaven City Council	**Funded by:** Shoalhaven City Council NSW DCJ & SCCH

Key takeaways

If you don't have land, capital or development expertise, that's OK—you can still play a key role by laying the groundwork for housing delivery for your constituents in your area.

Building support is not passive—it's a deliberate, structured approach that builds the relationships and political capital needed for deeper involvement in future.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & partnerships	• Developed an Affordable Housing Strategy (2017) • Built relationships with SCCH and DCJ
2. Planning & policy levers	• Included affordable housing in strategic planning documents • Re-zoning and urban centre prioritisation through the Strategy
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	
4. Land-based contributions	• Forgone land sale revenue by contributing land (value $2.2M) • Enabled layered funding from council, SCCH and DCJ
5. Direct delivery & ownership	

Source: Community Housing Industry Association NSW. (n.d.). Case study: Shoalhaven City Council and Southern Cross Community Housing – Coomea Street, Bomaderry. CHIA NSW.

2. Planning & policy levers

Use planning tools to make delivering affordable housing easier

Overview

Councils can use their statutory planning powers to influence the delivery of affordable housing. These mechanisms enable councils to shape private development outcomes through inclusionary requirements, planning incentives, or negotiated agreements such as Voluntary Planning Agreements (VPAs).

This lever does not require councils to contribute land or capital but does require strong policy frameworks, planning staff capability, and political commitment. Councils can play a significant enabling role, especially in high-growth or redevelopment areas.

When to use this lever

This lever is most appropriate when:

- you have strong or growing private development housing pipeline
- you have strong political support within council for affordable housing mandates or negotiations
- you have the capacity to embed requirements into LEPs, DCPs, or VPAs.

Survey insights: What councils are already doing

Planning provisions are seen as the most critical local government lever. When asked to identify council's most important role in supporting social and affordable housing, **74%** of respondents nominated planning provisions.

Planning roles are also reflected in councils' past involvement in housing projects. Nearly one-third of councils **(30%)** reported having been involved through a planning agreement (such as a VPA), and **19%** had contributed via rezoning approvals.

Preconditions

Community buy-in is more essential with early engagement allowing for greater collaboration opportunities with CHP partners.

Private sector interest or participation: The effectiveness of planning levers often depends on having willing private sector partners who see value in affordable housing delivery.

Partnering with housing provider including CHPs, private developers, and state/territory government agencies. Early engagement with a capable housing provider helps ensure feasibility but not a requirement.

Delivery Mechanisms	Description	Key features
a) Affordable housing contribution schemes	Councils use planning instruments or formal schemes to apply fixed contribution requirements, typically triggered by development in designated areas. Contributions may involve a percentage of dwellings, land, or cash, informed by local housing needs, feasibility, and policy settings. In some cases, developers provide cash in lieu of on-site affordable housing. These contributions, though set through planning, can be pooled and strategically directed toward enabling infrastructure or future housing delivery.	- Uniform, area-based - Triggered by policy - Not negotiated
b) Planning agreements with developers	Site-specific agreements negotiated during rezonings or large DAs. In return for additional development rights (e.g. height or density uplift), developers voluntarily offer a public benefit such as gifting land, delivering affordable dwellings, or contributing funds. These agreements are bespoke and often tied to significant development changes.	- Individually negotiated - Linked to rezonings - Terms vary
c) Planning incentives	Councils embed planning bonuses in their local planning frameworks to reward affordable housing delivery. Developers who include affordable housing can access greater design flexibility, additional floor space, or other incentives. These provisions are not negotiated individually but apply consistently to eligible developments.	- Opt-in - Consistent rules - No negotiation
d) Prioritised DA assessment	Councils fast-track eligible affordable housing DAs to reduce holding costs and delays. Prioritisation may be based on eligibility criteria such as project size, delivery model, or partnership with a CHP.	- Processing tool - Reduces risk/delay - Supports viable delivery
e) Planning system settings that support feasibility	Councils can improve the viability of affordable housing by reviewing planning controls that affect development feasibility while ensuring adverse amenity impacts for the community are avoided	- Uniformly applied

2. Planning & policy levers

Use planning tools to make delivering affordable housing easier

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits	Key risks
• **Low-cost, high-leverage tool:** leverage existing council powers without requiring direct capital investment and shape development outcomes across multiple sites or precincts overtime. • **Enables scalable delivery and flexibility:** planning controls can apply across the LGA, unlocking longer-term supply and provides flexibility to negotiate site-specific outcomes through VPAs. • **Creates market certainty:** clear policy settings gives developers confidence and signals intent to CHPs, developers and the community. • **Drives alignment with state/federal objectives:** allows council to embed housing priorities into statutory planning frameworks. • **Supports negotiated outcomes:** VPAs offer flexibility to secure affordable housing in exchange for uplift or zoning benefits and helps councils secure public value in redevelopment or rezoning processes.	• **Time and complexity:** amending LEPs or DCPs is a lengthy process requiring consultation and state approval and can be resource intensive and politically contested. • **Legal and probity risks:** without a clear policy framework (e.g. VPA guidelines or inclusionary targets), negotiated planning outcomes may be viewed as inconsistent or unfair. This can undermine community trust, trigger developer uncertainty, and raise probity concerns around how planning concessions are exchanged for affordable housing contributions. • **Uncertain delivery outcomes:** planning tools don't guarantee affordable housing will be delivered as developers may resist or seek to offset to offset inclusionary requirements. Additionally, the housing product type, tenure, and affordability levels may not align with council intent unless clearly specified. • **Community opposition:** zoning changes or increased density can trigger community pushback. The perceived trade-offs (e.g. height for affordability) may be contentious.

Pieces of the puzzle

1

Audit your current planning framework

- *Identify where affordable housing is (or could be) referenced in your LEP, DCP, and LSPS.*
- *Assess recent or upcoming rezonings or development hotspots that could enable delivery.*

2

Define your affordable housing objectives

- *Determine target cohorts, tenure types, and delivery thresholds.*
- *Align with internal housing strategy and state planning guidelines where applicable.*

3

Select appropriate mechanisms

- *Amend LEPs to introduce affordable housing clauses or create precinct-specific overlays.*
- *Adjust DCPs to provide incentives (e.g. bonus Floor Space Ratio (FSR), reduced parking, flexible controls).*

4

Build a policy position and consult

- *Engage councillors, staff and community to build internal support.*
- *Work with your state or territory planning department and legal advisors to ensure compliance and consistency.*

5

Implement and monitor

- *Embed housing objectives in strategic documents (e.g. LSPS) to reinforce intent.*
- *Track planning outcomes (e.g. number of units secured through VPAs) and adjust approach over time.*
- *Ensure affordable housing remains as such for the allotted timeframe.*

CASE STUDY: Randwick City Council, NSW

Source: Randwick City Council. (2023b). *Randwick City Affordable Rental Housing Strategy 2023–2032*.

Background & key challenges

Randwick City, located in Sydney's Eastern Suburbs, faces significant housing affordability challenges. With high property values and a limited supply of affordable rental options, lower-income households struggle to live and work locally. The council recognised the need to facilitate affordable housing, especially for lower-income households, to maintain a socially diverse and inclusive community.

Council's Role: Strategic Planning & Policy Reform

Randwick City Council has implemented a comprehensive planning and policy framework to address housing affordability:

- **Affordable Housing Strategy:** Adopted in 2007, this strategy outlines the council's commitment to affordable housing and provides a framework for implementation.
- **Affordable Housing Policy:** This policy guides the council's use of planning powers under the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to assist in the provision of affordable housing.
- **Affordable Housing Contributions Scheme:** Under the Randwick Local Environmental Plan (LEP) 2012, developers are required to contribute to affordable housing in specific areas, such as the Kensington and Kingsford town centres and Housing Investigation Areas. Contributions can be in the form of in-kind (built units) or monetary payments.
- **Planning Agreements Policy**: This policy establishes a framework for negotiating planning agreements with developers, ensuring contributions towards public facilities, including affordable housing.

Key outcomes

Randwick City Council's Affordable Housing Contributions Scheme demonstrates how planning policy can be used to steadily increase affordable housing without requiring land transfers or major subsidies.

One example is the Newmarket Randwick redevelopment, which delivered 10 affordable dwellings through this scheme. These homes are managed by a CHP under the council's Affordable Rental Housing Program.

Key features of the scheme include:

- **Designated Areas:** The scheme applies to developments in the Kensington and Kingsford town centres and Housing Investigation Areas.
- **Contribution Rates:** Developers are required to contribute a percentage of the total floor area of residential developments towards affordable housing. For instance, in the Kensington and Kingsford town centres, the contribution rate increased from 3% to 5% for development applications lodged after 13 August 2022.
- **Forms of Contribution:** Contributions can be made either as in-kind (dedicated affordable housing units) or monetary payments. The council's preferred method is the dedication of completed dwellings, which are then managed by CHPs.
- **Management:** The affordable housing units acquired through this scheme are managed by registered CHPs in accordance with the council's Affordable Rental Housing Programs and Procedures.

Key takeaways

This planning-focused approach allows the council you to increase the stock of affordable housing without the need for direct land contributions or significant financial incentives.

Integrating affordable housing requirements into the planning process means that you can ensure a more sustainable and ongoing provision of affordable housing options within its jurisdiction.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	• Developed the affordable housing strategy in 2007 which provides a framework for implementation
2. Planning & policy levers	• Affordable housing contribution Scheme • Planning agreements / frameworks • Affordable housing Policy
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	*Note that other levers are used by Randwick to delivery affordable housing but these are not the focus of the case study.*
4. Land-based contributions	
5. Direct delivery & ownership	

Source:Randwick City Council. (2023a). *Affordable Housing Contributions Scheme*. https://www.randwick.nsw.gov.au/planning-and-building/planning-controls/affordable-housing-contributions-scheme

3. Financial incentives & subsidies

Use funding tools to improve project viability and increase the number of affordable dwellings in your local area

Overview

Councils can use financial incentives and subsidies to improve project feasibility, often through one-off contributions that reduce capital costs. These interventions support affordable housing delivery without requiring the council to retain land ownership or take on development risk.

This lever differs from *planning and policy levers*, which shape the planning environment but don't directly reduce project costs, and from *land-based contributions*, where the council contributes land or retains ownership or long-term interest in the land. Instead, financial incentives are usually transactional and do not involve ongoing control.

While councils may choose to reduce or waive fees and charges, they should be aware that this will reduce availability of funds for other council services and infrastructure. In general, councils are not funded to deliver affordable housing and these costs should be borne by state or federal governments

When to use this lever

This lever is most appropriate when:

- your council prefers not to take on the long-term liability of owning or maintaining housing assets or does not have capacity to
- you have capital support to unlock feasibility, especially for CHPs or small-scale projects
- your intent is to incentivise delivery without assuming ownership risk
- you wish to create delivery momentum using available reserves and grants.

Survey insights: What councils are saying

71% of councils identified funding for enabling infrastructure as one of the most useful forms of support. This highlights the importance of infrastructure investment in unlocking housing feasibility.

Additionally, 38% of regional and rural councils ranked *enabling infrastructure* as the most critical local government support, ahead of planning reform or land.

Developer contributions play a vital role when it comes to enabling infrastructure, including through the affordable housing offset, which many councils can use as a strategic reserve.

In the survey, multiple councils flagged developer contribution reform as a priority, with requests for clearer guidance on how and when contributions could be waived or discounted

Preconditions

Community buy-in is more essential as it helps justify the use of public funds and builds political backing for incentives.

Private sector interest or participation: Financial levers can be effective if there are willing private sector partners who see value in affordable housing delivery.

Partnering with housing provider including CHPs, private developers, and state/territory government agencies. This helps target support effectively and achieve housing outcomes.

Council needs **available funds** or the ability to allocate resources (e.g. via enabling infrastructure or fee waivers).

Delivery Mechanisms	Description
a) Fee waivers and reduced developer contributions	Council can reduce or waive certain fees and charges like development application fees, infrastructure contributions set by state planning laws, or in some cases ongoing council rates. This can lower both the upfront and long-term costs of delivering affordable housing, improving financial viability. These incentives are usually offered case-by-case and may be tied to specific outcomes (e.g. number of affordable homes provided).
b) Enabling infrastructure contributions	Council invests in infrastructure upgrades, such as roads, drainage, utilities, and public realm improvements, that directly support the feasibility of affordable housing projects. These works reduce development costs and risks by ensuring essential services are in place. Enabling infrastructure is often funded through developer contributions from standard developments, excluding those where contributions are waived to incentivise affordable housing delivery.
c) Targeted grants or rebates	Some councils offer small grants or rebates to help cover planning costs, rent subsidies, or feasibility studies. These are less common due to probity and budget constraints but can be useful for unlocking or de-risking a project. Any grant program should be competitive, transparent and tied to clear community outcomes.

3. Financial incentives & subsidies

Use funding tools to improve project viability and increase the number of affordable dwellings in your local area

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits

- **Improves feasibility:** financial contributions (such as cash grants or waived fees) can reduce up-front costs, improving the viability of projects that may otherwise be marginal—especially for CHPs operating with limited capital.
- **No long-term asset risk:** unlike council-led delivery or long-term land leasing, financial incentives do not require councils to manage, maintain, or retain ownership of housing assets. This lowers exposure to financial or legal risk.
- **Flexible application:** can be tailored to project needs, delivery stages, or specific cohorts. Mechanisms like grants, rebates or discounts can be applied project-by-project or as part of a broader policy.
- **Enables delivery momentum:** subsidies can act as a catalyst, attracting CHP or private sector interest by bridging small but critical funding gaps.
- **Demonstrates commitment:** offering financial support signals that council is serious about addressing housing need. It builds credibility with CHPs, state agencies and funding partners, potentially unlocking co-investment or in-kind contributions.

Key risks

- **Limited funding capacity:** financial incentives rely on council's budget or reserves, which may be constrained or subject to competing priorities. Small councils in particular may struggle to offer meaningful support at scale.
- **Uncertain impact:** even where support is offered, it may not be enough to make a project viable—particularly if broader barriers like zoning, infrastructure, or market conditions are not addressed. Incentives must often be paired with other levers to be effective.
- **Probity concerns:** if councils do not have clear, consistent guidelines for awarding financial incentives (e.g. cash grants or enabling infrastructure), they risk perceptions of unfairness, favouritism, or poor use of public funds.
- **Influence depends on design:** While councils may not retain direct control once funds are committed, they can shape delivery outcomes through well-designed funding agreements, clear policy expectations, and monitoring mechanisms.
- **Community perception:** ratepayers may question why public money is being used to support certain developments—particularly if the benefits are not clearly visible or well-communicated.

Pieces of the puzzle

1 Define policy intent and mechanisms

- *Confirm objectives (e.g. support feasibility gap, reduce holding costs, enable tenant outcomes).*
- *Identify which mechanisms will be available (e.g. grants, fee waivers, land discounts, enabling infrastructure).*

2 Establish eligibility criteria and process

- *Establish clear parameters for the types of projects that may qualify for financial incentives. This helps guide future decisions and ensures transparency and consistency.*
- *Establish how incentives are approved (policy, resolution, EOI).*

3 Assess project-level financial and policy fit

- *Undertake a case-by-case assessment of each application or opportunity.*
- *Confirm proposal aligns with criteria and model financial implications.*
- *Seek internal finance, legal and planning input if required.*

4 Formalise delivery arrangements

- *Secure commitments and clarify responsibilities.*
- *Draft funding agreements, deeds or planning instruments.*
- *Include clear delivery milestones, reporting obligations and clawback provisions.*

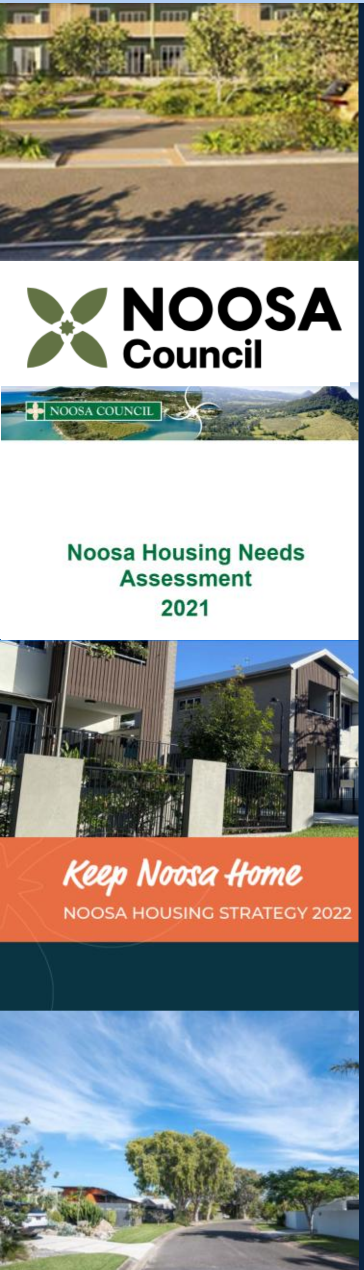
5 Implement and disburse support

- *Provide agreed support (e.g. release funding, process fee waiver, deliver enabling infrastructure).*
- *Maintain oversight of key delivery risks and dependencies.*

6 Monitor outcomes and evaluate impact

- *Track project progress, ensure compliance, and report back on housing outcomes achieved through the subsidy.*

CASE STUDY: Noosa Council, QLD



Background & key challenges

Noosa Council faced mounting housing pressures, including a shortage of affordable rentals, limited housing diversity, and growing homelessness. With high home ownership rates, an ageing population, and land constraints due to environmental overlays and tourism demand, the council recognised that without local intervention, the crisis would deepen.

Despite housing being a state responsibility in Queensland, Noosa made a deliberate decision to step into the space. This was driven by worsening local conditions and a lack of viable alternatives for key workers, low-income households, and vulnerable residents.

Key role: Strategic partnerships & financial levers

To respond, Noosa developed a **Housing Needs Assessment (2021)** and a **Housing Strategy (2022),** which laid the groundwork for a series of targeted initiatives. These included:

- reforming planning controls to support affordable housing
- creating a Housing Projects Officer role to lead delivery
- implementing financial incentives to encourage private housing developments
- Encourages smaller dwellings and restricting short term accommodation use of dwellings
- activating council-owned land for social housing
- building partnerships with CHPs and homelessness services
- exploring innovative models for key worker accommodation.

Key outcomes

- **Planning Incentives:** Planning incentives include bonus height provisions for developments with 20% affordable housing and bonus incentives for smaller dwellings.
- **Financial incentives:** Noosa Council has recently introduced a suite of financial measures to support affordable housing delivery. These include:
  - a waiver of infrastructure charges for secondary dwellings, saving applicants approximately $7,000 per application,
  - a tiered approach to development application fees, with full waivers for not-for-profit providers and partial waivers for private developers.
  - developers of affordable rental housing can defer infrastructure charges as long as the premises are managed by a CHP and continue to be used for affordable housing.
  - the council offers a 50% reduction in developer fees for projects delivering crisis, emergency, transitional, social, or affordable rental housing through not-for-profit organisations.
- **Cooroy Social Housing Project:** Council-owned land (a former landfill) is being remediated and subdivided and sold at market value to a CHP.

Project details

Location Cooroy, Noosa, QLD	**Number of dwellings** 25 Social houses
Initiated 2022	**Completed** Expected 2026
Delivered by: Coast2Bay Housing Group	**Managed by:** Coast2Bay Housing Group
Land provided by: Noosa Council	**Funded by:** Combination of various state federal funding grants

Key takeaways

Noosa's experience demonstrates that councils can play a pivotal enabling role in *social* housing delivery (i.e. not just affordable housing), even when it's outside their formal remit.

By offering greater financial incentives to not-for – profits, along with the remediation of the former landfill site, Noosa unlocked land for housing and structured a market-value sale to a CHP for the delivery of 25 social houses.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	• Created a dedicated housing officer role • Built partnerships with CHPs and homelessness services
2. Planning & policy levers	• Introduced planning amendments to support affordable housing and restrict short-term rentals
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	• Waived fees for secondary dwellings • Waiver of developer application fees • 50% reduction of developer fees for social and affordable housing
4. Land-based contributions	• Activated council-owned land for housing, including remediation and sale to CHPs
5. Direct delivery & ownership	

4. Land Contributions (A)

A) Land Sales & Transfers: Activating council land for affordable housing

Overview

Selling council land can be a powerful way to help get affordable housing off the ground, especially when land is the missing piece. This option allows you to unlock delivery by handing control over to a trusted delivery partner. It works best when your council doesn't plan to retain ownership or manage the site long term. Whether it's sold at market or discounted value, the key is making sure the deal locks in the long-term supply of affordability housing.

Selling land, rather than leasing, can be the quicker route in terms of governance and delivery. It's useful when you want to remove ongoing obligations from council. But it also comes with more complexity, especially around legal restrictions and community expectations. You'll need clear strategy, legal advice, and clear messaging to tell your community about why this action delivers public benefit.

When to use this lever

This lever is most appropriate when:

- you have council-owned land that's suitable for housing
- your council isn't in a position to retain or manage the asset long term
- you want to hand over control to a trusted delivery partner (i.e. CHP).
- you've consulted your community and have support.

Survey insights: What councils are saying

39% of councils had contributed land (either directly or via transfer) to an affordable housing project.

Of these most **(63%)** reported that there were **obstacles and barriers faced in using council land.**

Councils also raised concern that, even when land was available, they lacked guidance on structuring land deals, particularly with CHPs.

Preconditions

Community buy-in is more essential as it helps justify the use of public funds and builds political backing for land contributions.

Council may need funding capacity to deliver (site due diligence, planning or rezoning, potentially enabling infrastructure).

Council would need access to available land that is appropriately zoned or is able to be rezoned and the land should not be earmarked for core civic or operational use.

Partnering with housing provider including CHPs, private developers, and state/territory government agencies. This will aid in the delivery and management of the project and helps ensure feasibility.

Delivery Mechanisms	Description
a) Direct sale with conditions	This involves council selling land directly to a CHP or delivery partner, typically at a discount. But in many states, you can't sell below market value without public consultation, competitive processes, or ministerial sign-off. To get around this, some councils sell at market value but include enforceable deed conditions or covenants that require the land be used for affordable housing. Selling at market rate does impact the feasibility of the project.
b) Transfer to a state agency	Some councils transfer land to a state body like the NSW Department of Communities and Justice (DCJ) which then enters a community housing partnership agreement with the CHP. In the *Shoalhaven example*, council transferred land to DCJ, which then entered into an agreement with Southern Cross Community Housing. The agreement required the land to be used for affordable housing in perpetuity. This allowed council to unlock housing while avoiding legal restrictions on below-market-value transfers directly to CHPs. **Another example in a NSW context, land transfers from LGA to CHPs are currently being facilitated through Landcom.**
c) Use of a trust or council-led company	This approach involves creating a separate entity, like a charitable trust or a not-for-profit housing company, controlled by council. This is known as a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). The land can either be **transferred into the entity (sale) or leased to it on a long-term basis**. This gives councils greater flexibility. They can enable delivery while still influencing how land is used over time. These entities can partner more easily with CHPs or private developers and are not subject to the same procurement or land disposal rules as councils. This model works well where councils want to retain strategic control without directly owning or managing the property.

4. Land Contributions (A)

A) Land Sales & Transfers: Activating council land for affordable housing

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits

- **Direct impact:** selling land is one of the most straightforward ways your council can contribute to affordable housing. Once the land is sold, your council doesn't need to stay involved—delivery is handled by the CHP or developer and the ongoing management will ideally be handled by a CHP.
- **Unlocks underutilised land:** particularly valuable for repurposing sites that aren't being used effectively.
- **Enables partnerships:** makes your council a serious partner and can unlock state and CHP co-investment.
- **Governance-lite (with the right setup):** compared to ongoing council involvement or asset management, this can be a lower-burden option once risks are managed.

Key risks

- **Legal barriers:** you'll need to be careful about how you structure the sale—especially if you're selling below market value. Different states have different rules, and some require open market testing or special approvals (see slide 33 for further details)
- **Community concerns:** people may push back if they see council land being sold, even for a good cause. Bring the community along early and make sure you have a strong justification and transparent approach.
- **Less control:** once it's sold, you don't get to influence how the site is used—unless your agreements are solid.

Pieces of the puzzle

1

Assess land suitability

- *Confirm zoning, physical site conditions, and that the land is not required for core council use.*
- *Consider proximity to services and amenities for future tenants.*

2

Engage internal decision-makers early

- *Get alignment from councillors, the executive team, and legal/governance staff.*
- *Consider a council resolution to formally endorse the project direction.*

3

Seek tailored legal and probity advice

- *Understand state-specific land disposal rules, especially for below-market sales.*
- *Identify whether you need to publicly advertise the sale, run a competitive EOI, or seek ministerial approval.*

4

Engage the community

- *Clearly explain the benefit: affordable housing delivery, not commercial gain.*
- *Consider doing this as part of a broader housing strategy consultation process.*
- *Where needed, prepare supporting materials that explain affordability outcomes.*

5

Choose your delivery approach

- *Direct sale with affordability conditions*
- *Transfer to a state agency with community housing partnership agreement*
- *Transfer to a trust or Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)*

6

Embed affordability protections

- *Use legal mechanisms like restrictive covenants, deed conditions, or contractual obligations to secure affordable outcomes.*

CASE STUDY: Shire of Narembeen, WA

CEACA
Supporting Wheatbelt Communities

Background & key challenges

The Shire of Narembeen, like many councils in Western Australia's Wheatbelt, faced a critical shortage of aged and affordable housing. With an ageing population and limited local housing options, older residents were increasingly forced to relocate to metropolitan areas, undermining community cohesion and accelerating regional population decline.

The feasibility of housing development in the Wheatbelt was severely constrained by low market prices that made private investment unattractive along with high construction costs and limited availability of skilled labour. Local councils therefore took it upon themselves to solve the problem .

Council's Role: Collaboration translating to delivery

- **Regional Collaboration:** The Shire of Narembeen is a member of the *Central East Accommodation & Care Alliance Inc* (CEACA) formed in 2012, which is a regional alliance of 11 councils in WA's eastern Wheatbelt. CEACA is governed by a board of council representatives and pools resources, governance, and strategic direction to deliver housing outcomes at scale.
- **CHP Registration:** In 2024, CEACA became a registered CHP enabling it to access state and federal funding streams that were previously out of reach.
- **Land Contributions:** The Shire of Narembeen recently gifted fully serviced greenfield land (freehold) to CEACA for a nominal amount. This land contribution was critical to unlocking external investment and progressing new affordable housing developments.

Key outcomes

- Delivered 71 two-bedroom aged units across member shires.
- 52 additional units planned, supported by state (Department of Housing and Works) and federal (Housing Australia) funding under the HAFF.
- CEACA is its own organisation, separate from the councils. Being a member doesn't give councils ownership of any assets, but they do have a say in decisions through their representative on the Management Committee.
- CEACA has its own CEO, administrative staff, and centralised contract management.
- CEACA has sold units from one withdrawn council (Trayning), with sale proceeds set aside for reinvestment into the Expansion project.
- CEACA is exploring Stage 3 and separate key worker accommodation projects via Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs).

Project details

Location CEACA Member councils – Eastern Wheatbelt	**Number of dwellings** Stage 1: 71 units; Stage 2: 52 units
Initiated Stage 1: ~2018; Stage 2: ~2023	**Completed** Stage 1: Completed Stage 2: In progress (funding to be confirmed)
Delivered by: CEACA	**Managed by:** CEACA
Land provided by: The Shire of Narembeen has committed to gifting land in full	**Funded by:** State and federal governments; HAFF; council co-investment

Key takeaways

When small councils team up, big things can happen. The CEACA model shows that even in remote areas with limited resources, collaboration can unlock housing outcomes that would be impossible for any one council to achieve alone. By pooling land, funding, and governance, the 11 Wheatbelt councils turned a shared challenge into a coordinated solution.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	• Councils formed CEACA to address housing market failure.
2. Planning & policy levers	• Minimal planning barriers due to pre-zoned land. • Council support streamlined approvals.
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	• Councils contributed ~$50K per unit (10% of build cost).
4. Land-based contributions	• Councils gifted fully serviced greenfield land (freehold). • Land transferred to CEACA for nominal amount (e.g., $1).
5. Direct delivery & ownership	

4. Land Contributions (B)

B) Land Lease: Activating council land for affordable housing

Overview

Leasing land instead of selling it gives councils a way to retain ownership while still enabling affordable housing delivery. This can be appealing when council land is strategically located or has long-term value, and when you want to ensure the land is used for community benefit over time. A long-term lease (e.g. 30–99 years) gives CHPs the certainty they need to finance and deliver housing—while letting council hold onto the asset.

It also provides a pathway to ensure land use remains aligned with community goals, because lease terms can include conditions about affordability, maintenance, and tenant mix. The lease model is particularly useful where political sensitivity or legal complexity make direct sale harder.

When to use this lever

This lever is worth exploring when:

- you want to enable housing but retain long-term control over the site
- your council has land with long-term community value or strategic importance
- you have strong community support or a well-prepared communication plan
- you're working with a CHP that has long-term delivery capability
- legal or political conditions make selling less desirable

Survey insights: What councils are saying

Several councils reported a preference to lease, not sell, land for affordable housing, especially where land has long-term community value or political sensitivity.

"We want to keep the land in council hands, but don't know how to make that work for community housing."

Councils were uncertain if CHPs or developers could secure finance against leasehold interests, raising concerns that leasing may limit project feasibility unless supported by government programs.

Preconditions

Community buy-in is more essential as it helps justify the use of public funds and builds political backing for land contributions.

Council may need funding capacity to deliver (site due diligence, planning or rezoning, potentially enabling infrastructure).

Council would need access to available land that is appropriately zoned or is able to be rezoned and the land should not be earmarked for core civic or operational use.

Partnering with housing provider including CHPs, private developers, and state/territory government agencies. This will help deliver and manage the project. Partners help to ensure feasibility.

Delivery Mechanisms	Description
a) Standard long-term lease	Council enters into a lease with a CHP, often at nominal or discounted rent. The ability to lease land below market rate depends on your state's legislation, some allow this more readily than others, while a few require ministerial approval or demonstration of community benefit. The lease can specify the purpose (e.g. long-term affordable housing), length (typically 30–99 years), and expectations (such as tenant types or management standards). This model is widely used across Australia and can give CHPs confidence to invest, especially when affordability objectives are clearly set out and monitored.
b) Lease via state agency or government program	In some cases, councils lease land to a state housing authority that then partners with a CHP. This can help navigate legal and funding barriers, especially in states with restrictions on leasing below market value. For example, in New South Wales, councils may lease land to Land and Housing Corporation (LAHC), which can then deliver housing through partnerships with CHPs. In Queensland, the Housing Investment Fund enables state-facilitated partnerships that combine government land with CHP-led delivery. These models can unlock funding, reduce legal risk, and streamline project delivery by aligning council intent with state program requirements.
c) Lease to SPV or housing trust	Similar to the sale pathway, councils can lease land to a special purpose vehicle (SPV) or charitable trust that then develops and manages the housing. This structure allows councils to maintain oversight and influence without needing to manage the asset directly.

4. Land Contributions (B)

B) Land Lease: Activating council land for affordable housing

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits	Key risks
• **Retain ownership and flexibility:** leasing lets you support delivery without giving up long-term control of the land. This is useful for sites with future strategic or community value. • **Secure community benefit:** long-term leases can lock in conditions that ensure housing stays affordable and well-managed for decades. • **Lower political risk than sale:** compared to a land sale, leasing is often easier to explain to the community and councillors. • **Asset retention for long-term benefit:** ownership ensures council retains a valuable asset base. Land can remain in public hands, preserving options for future use or redevelopment, while still meeting current social needs.	• **Limited access to finance:** CHPs or developers may find it harder to secure finance for construction, as they don't own the land and may have limited ability to offer the leasehold interest as loan collateral. • **Lease complexity:** Poorly structured leases can create ambiguity or fail to secure long-term outcomes. You'll need legal support to get this right. • **Council oversight burden:** You may need processes in place to monitor compliance with affordability and tenancy obligations. • **Limited delivery certainty:** If the lease isn't well-structured, it may not result in housing delivery. This means you'll need to choose your partners carefully.

Pieces of the puzzle

1 Assess land suitability

- *Confirm zoning, physical site conditions, and that the land is not required for core council use.*
- *Consider proximity to services and amenities for future tenants.*

2 Engage internal decision-makers early

- *Get alignment from councillors, the executive team, and legal/governance staff.*
- *Consider a council resolution to formally endorse the project direction.*

3 Engage and assess delivery partners

- *Discuss lease terms with potential CHPs early to check feasibility and alignment.*
- *Assess the partner's delivery track record, funding sources, and asset management plans.*

4 Engage the community

- *Clearly explain the benefit: affordable housing delivery, not commercial gain.*
- *Consider doing this as part of a broader housing strategy consultation process.*
- *Where needed, prepare supporting materials that explain affordability outcomes.*

5 Structure the lease agreement & select delivery pathway

Work with legal experts to develop a lease with clear timeframes, rent levels (nominal or discounted), affordability obligations, and end-of-lease provisions.

- *Direct lease to a CHP (see slide 26 and 27).*
- *Lease to a government agency*
- *Lease to a trust or SPV*

6 Monitor delivery and maintain visibility

- *Set up a lease compliance process (e.g. reporting, KPIs, or site inspections).*
- *Share outcomes publicly to demonstrate success and community impact.*

CASE STUDY: Moreton Bay City Council, QLD

Background & key challenges

Moreton Bay Council responded to the escalating housing crisis by shifting from a passive role to an active facilitator of housing delivery. Historically, councils viewed housing as a state responsibility, but increasing demand and limited supply prompted a strategic reassessment. A key challenge was balancing community expectations around asset retention with the need to unlock land for housing. Financial viability for CHPs was another barrier, exacerbated by high infrastructure charges and limited access to suitable land.

Council's role in delivering social and affordable housing.

1. **Building community support & strategic partnerships:** Council played a proactive role in advocating for state and federal funding to support housing delivery. It coordinated closely with CHPs to shape viable project proposals and aligned project timelines with the government.
2. **Policy and planning levers:** Council implemented streamlined planning processes, including a concierge-style DA service for eligible housing projects.
3. **Financial incentives:** To improve project viability, council offers: 100% remission of DA fees for qualifying housing projects and 100% remission of infrastructure charges
4. **Land activation via long-term leasing:** Two urban infill sites were selected and offered to CHPs under a 50-year peppercorn lease, enabling development without asset disposal. This lease model retains community ownership.

See the following slide for further details on these mechanisms

Key Outcomes

- Two pilot projects – Bric Housing (Caboolture) and Coast2Bay Housing Group (Morayfield)—were selected through a competitive EOI process and are progressing under 50-year peppercorn leases.
- Combined, these two projects will deliver 22 new dwellings, primarily for social housing tenants, with construction expected to commence following contract finalisation in late 2025.
- Council waived over $1 million in development fees and infrastructure charges across 15 suburbs to support social and affordable housing delivery.
- Policy reforms and incentives have catalysed a pipeline of projects, with council estimating a total exposure of $10–12 million in remitted charges as more developments proceed.

Project details

Location Urban infill site in Moreton Bay (2 projects)	**Number of dwellings** 22 dwellings
Initiated Early 2022 (EOI process launched)	**Completed** Expected late 2025
Delivered by: Bric Housing CHP, Coast to Bay Housing	**Managed by:** Bric Housing CHP, Coast to Bay Housing
Land provided by: Moreton Bay Council (50-year peppercorn lease)	**Funded by:** Queensland Government – QuickStarts program

Key takeaways

- Asset retention and long-term leases offer a politically and financially viable model
- Fee remissions and planning support significantly improve project viability
- Early engagement with CHPs and state government is critical to funding success
- Policy flexibility and delegated decision-making accelerate delivery.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	• Stakeholder engagement with CHPs • Funding alignment with state programs
2. Planning & policy levers	• Concierge style DA process • Ministerial Infrastructure Designation are encouraged
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	• 100% DA fee remissions • 100% infrastructure charges remissions • Rates and water exemptions
4. Land-based contributions	• Land audit • 50-year peppercorn leases • Asset retention
5. Direct delivery & ownership	

CASE STUDY: Moreton Bay City Council, QLD

Moreton Bay City Council use multiple different mechanisms to activate housing in their LGA. The following provides further details on each of these.

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships

- **Stakeholder Engagement:** Council met with 25 registered CHPs to understand delivery barriers and shape policy responses.
- **Cross-sector Collaboration:** Encouraged partnerships between CHPs and private developers, expanding delivery capacity.
- **State Advocacy:** Successfully advocated for funding of social and affordable housing pilot projects, even after initial rejection of one. Adjusting project timelines to align with state and federal funding rounds (e.g. QuickStarts) improving the likelihood of capital funding success.

2. Policy and planning levers

- **Concierge DA Service:** Council offers tailored support to CHPs and developers, helping navigate planning regulations (e.g., car parking ratios) for projects prioritising social and affordable housing
- **Ministerial Infrastructure Designation (MID):** Council is open to CHPs using the MID pathway, which avoids third-party appeals and can expedite approvals which is especially useful for projects that may face community resistance.

3. Financial incentives and subsides

Morton Bay City Council offer a number of financial incentives to encourage social and affordable housing developments. This includes:

- **Development Application (DA) Fee Remissions:** Council offers 100% remission of DA fees for qualifying housing projects. There is some flexibility with this policy with projects outside mapped priority areas can still receive full remission if deemed suitable with decisions delegated to the CEA for faster turnaround.
- **Infrastructure Charges Remissions:** Council remits 100% of infrastructure charges (often $500K–$1M per project) for eligible projects. This initiative has a safeguard in place which ensures that if the housing outcome isn't maintained for at least 15 years, the charges become payable by the property owner.
- **Rates and utility exemptions:** Under the new lease category, CHPs are exempt from rates and water charges.

4. Land-based contributions

The following table outlines the key features of the **50-year peppercorn leases**. These offer long term leases at nominal rents enabling CHPs to secure funding while council retains ownership of the land.

Feature	Details
Lease Type	Exclusive-use land leases for registered CHPs or Specialist Homelessness Services.
Lease Duration	• Up to 50 years for council freehold land. • Up to 30 years for state government trustee land (as per the Land Act 1994).
Rental Terms	Peppercorn lease: Nominal rent (e.g., $1/year payable on demand).
Developmen t Conditions	Leases are conditional on delivery of key development outcomes within a specified timeframe.
Responsibility	Lessee responsible for development, maintenance, and care of leased area
Council Role	No responsibility for constructed assets
Asset Return	Land and assets must be returned/removed at end of lease

5. Direct delivery and ownership

Direct delivery offers full control, but requires land, funding, and a clear delivery pathway.

Overview

This model involves councils directly delivering and owning affordable housing typically through development on council-owned sites. While councils can retain ownership and ensure long-term affordability outcomes, they should consider partnership with a registered CHP to manage the housing stock. CHPs bring tenancy management experience, wraparound services, and not-for-profit status that improves eligibility for government programs and funding.

This lever is most feasible when capital funding is available (through state or federal grants), land is already in council ownership, and there's a strong policy or community rationale for direct involvement.

When to use this lever

This lever is most appropriate when:

- you own suitable land and want to retain full ownership and control
- there's strong policy alignment or local political support for deeper council involvement
- capital grants or subsidies are available to offset construction costs
- you have access to a reliable CHP to manage properties
- you want to ensure enduring affordability and service outcomes through governance or deed restrictions.

Survey insights: What councils are already doing

- **9%** of councils reported acting as the primary developer for affordable housing projects in their LGA.
- A further **25%** were involved as a partner in delivery.

Some councils reported actively delivering housing, often through innovative methods. One noted: "*We have delivered social housing on council land using a modular solution.*"

Others highlighted that direct delivery remains outside their typical remit, with one stating: "*Property development isn't typically a core business service that councils provide.*"

Preconditions

Community support is critical and councils need to demonstrate strong community and political backing.

Funding capacity or access to subsidies to cover delivery costs. External funding is recommended (e.g. grants from state or federal).

Council would need access to available land that is appropriately zoned or is able to be rezoned and the land should not be earmarked for core civic or operational use.

Partnering with housing provider including CHPs, private developers, and state/territory government agencies. This will aid in the ongoing management of the project. Partners can help ensure long-term success.

Delivery Mechanisms	Description	Why a council might choose this
a) Council-led development with CHP management	Council retains ownership of the land and assets, acts as developer or project sponsor, and contracts a CHP to manage the tenancies. Alternatively, councils acquire existing buildings and repurpose into affordable housing. In this model – councils would provide land and capital (often through grants or reserves), oversees project delivery, including planning and procurement, maintains ownership post-construction and would then enter into a long-term management agreement with a CHP (usually 10+ years).	Preferred where council has land and/or capital, seeks to retain control, and wants to ensure long-term affordability through direct delivery.
c) Council-led Build-to-Rent (BtR)	Council develops and retains ownership of a multi-unit rental asset, then leases units to eligible tenants at below-market rents. Management is outsourced to a CHP or professional tenancy manager. This model suits councils seeking to establish a long-term rental portfolio.	Used where councils want to expand their rental portfolio and directly respond to unmet housing demand, but outsource tenancy operations.
d) Delivery via council-owned SPV or charitable trust	Council delivers housing through a wholly-owned SPV or charitable trust. This structure can hold assets, procure services, and manage risk separately from council's general operations. It allows council to maintain strategic control while separating governance and financial obligations. The SPV or trust may enter into service agreements with CHPs or tenancy managers.	Useful where council seeks arm's-length governance, enhanced commercial flexibility, or risk separation from core council functions.
d) Shared or transferred ownership with CHP	Council partners with a CHP to co-own or fully transfer ownership of housing assets. This may involve gifting or selling land or dwellings, with legal agreements (e.g. covenants, deeds, or CHAA) to secure long-term affordability and community benefit.	When council prefers to enable delivery without retaining ownership, while ensuring that housing remains affordable and well-managed by a trusted partner.

5. Direct delivery and ownership

Direct delivery offers full control, but requires land, funding, and a clear delivery pathway.

Key benefits and risks

Key benefits

- **Full ownership and control:** council controls the asset, delivery, and outcomes. Councils can directly shape housing typology, tenure mix, and design to meet identified community needs (e.g. accessible dwellings, family-size homes).
- **Long-term affordability:** ownership enables enforceable deed restrictions or agreements with CHPs.
- **Eligibility for government grants:** some programs favour or require council involvement or sponsorship.
- **Supports strategic use of council land:** can activate underutilised land to meet housing needs (however usually requires council land to be feasible).
- **Asset retention for long-term benefit:** ownership ensures council retains a valuable asset base. Housing can remain in public hands, preserving options for future use or redevelopment, while still meeting current social needs.
- **Potential to demonstrate leadership and innovation:** council-led projects can showcase innovative design, delivery models, or sustainability features — supporting broader policy leadership (e.g. net zero housing, universal design).

Key risks

- **Delivery and financial risk sits with council:** council is responsible for overseeing procurement, construction, and cost management. Delays, budget overruns or compliance failures may expose council to reputational or financial risk.
- **Upfront capital and financing burden:** council typically provides land and capital (through grants, reserves or borrowing). This can limit capacity to invest in other services or infrastructure and exposes council to debt risk.
- **Political and community scrutiny:** as a visible public investment, direct delivery can attract criticism around location, design, tenant mix, or cost — particularly in areas with local resistance to affordable housing.
- **Ongoing oversight burden:** even where tenancy is outsourced, council retains responsibility for long-term maintenance and governance. Poor oversight may compromise tenant outcomes or asset condition.
- **Sustainability of model:** without repeatable funding streams, hard to scale or replicate.

Pieces of the puzzle

1 Confirm suitable land and development

- *Ensure land is unencumbered and available for development.*
- *Confirm zoning permits residential or mixed-use housing.*
- *Undertake due diligence.*

2 Secure capital funding & financial plan

- *Identify internal reserves, grants, or borrowing capacity.*
- *Develop a clear financial model, including development costs and long-term management.*

3 Build internal delivery capability

- *Assign a project sponsor and cross-functional team.*
- *Consider external project management support if internal capability is limited.*
- *Engage legal support.*

4 Engage community & manage expectations

- *Proactively communicate the benefits of direct delivery.*
- *Prepare to address concerns about cost, location, or tenant mix.*

5 Identify delivery model and structure

Choose a governance and delivery approach:

- *Council-led delivery with CHP management*
- *Joint oversight structure*
- *Council-owned SPV or charitable trust.*

Draft agreements covering roles, tenancy, asset management etc.

6 Partner with a CHP for long-term management

- *Select a CHP with the right scale and service model.*
- *Co-design tenant selection, rent setting, and support services.*
- *Develop a long-term management agreement (10+ years).*

7 Deliver and monitor performance

- *Oversee construction, procurement, and risk management.*
- *Set up asset and tenancy performance monitoring.*
- *Report outcomes publicly and embed feedback into future delivery.*

CASE STUDY: Yarriambiack Shire Council, VIC

Background & key challenges

Yarriambiack Shire Council, located in north-western Victoria, faces the typical pressures of a small rural municipality: population decline, ageing demographics, and limited housing diversity. Most homes in the region are large, older dwelling, often three bedrooms or more, yet the majority are occupied by just one or two people. This mismatch between housing stock and household size created a clear need for smaller, affordable homes, particularly for older residents looking to downsize.

Despite this need, the council struggled to attract external investment. An initial partnership with a registered CHP was promising but ultimately unsuccessful due to the small scale of the project and the geographic isolation of the region. Without sufficient funding or a CHP partner, the council was forced to take on the project itself.

Roles and Levers Used to Increase Social and Affordable Housing

With limited external support, the council took on direct delivery, using a mix of policy, planning, and financial levers to make the project viable:

- **Building community support & strategic partnerships:** Coordinated with local housing committees and aged care providers.
- **Planning & Policy Levers:** Used planning scheme exemptions for council-led builds under $1M and Rezoned surplus land
- **Land-Based Contributions:** Council gifted fully serviced land for housing projects but retained ownership
- **Direct Delivery & Ownership**: Council led project management and construction.

Key outcomes

- Delivered seven new affordable homes across five towns.
- Strengthened partnerships with aged care and housing groups.
- Enabled downsizing for older residents, freeing up larger homes.
- Transitioned property management from volunteer committees to professional providers.
- Prepared additional land for future housing development.
- Maintained affordability in perpetuity, with rental income reinvested into maintenance.

Project details

Location: Woomelang, Murtoa, Hopetoun, Rupanyup, Warracknabeal	**Number of dwellings:** 7 new builds (plus 8 existing managed by Dunmunkle Lodge)
Initiated: 2021	**Completed:** 2025-26
Delivered by: Yarriambiack Shire Council	**Managed by:** Dunmunkle Lodge (except Woomelang – local committee)
Land provided by: Yarriambiack Shire Council	**Funded by:** • $500k loan • $240k Murtoa housing • $180k Woomelang Housing • $2.8 m Grant from Regional Development Victoria • $80k Council funds

Key takeaways

Yarriambiack showed that small councils can lead housing delivery when needed, even without a housing provider. Partnering with local aged care organisations made long-term management possible, but delivering the project stretched council resources.

Next time, they'd bring in a dedicated project manager to ease the load and improve efficiency.

COUNCIL LEVERS

1. Building community support & strategic partnerships	• Conducted community education to demystify social housing. • Coordinated with local housing committees and aged care providers.
2. Planning & policy levers	• Used planning scheme exemptions for council-led builds under $1M. • Rezoned surplus land for future housing.
3. Financial incentives & subsidies	
4. Land-based contribution	• Council gifted fully serviced land for housing projects.
5. Direct delivery & ownership	• Council led project management and construction. • Retained ownership of land and assets. • Managed by Dunmunkle Lodge

What role will your council play?

Choosing the Right Role: A Guided Starting Point

Councils can support affordable housing in many ways (from light-touch advocacy to direct delivery). But not every council will have the same appetite, resources, or political support. The key is to find a role that's both realistic and impactful.

Start by working with your executive team and councillors to explore:

- **How far are we willing to go?** Are we focused on advocacy and partnerships, or ready to contribute land or funding?
- **What resources do we have?** Do we have land, staff, or budget to support delivery?
- **What risks are we prepared to take on?** What are the political, financial, and reputational considerations?

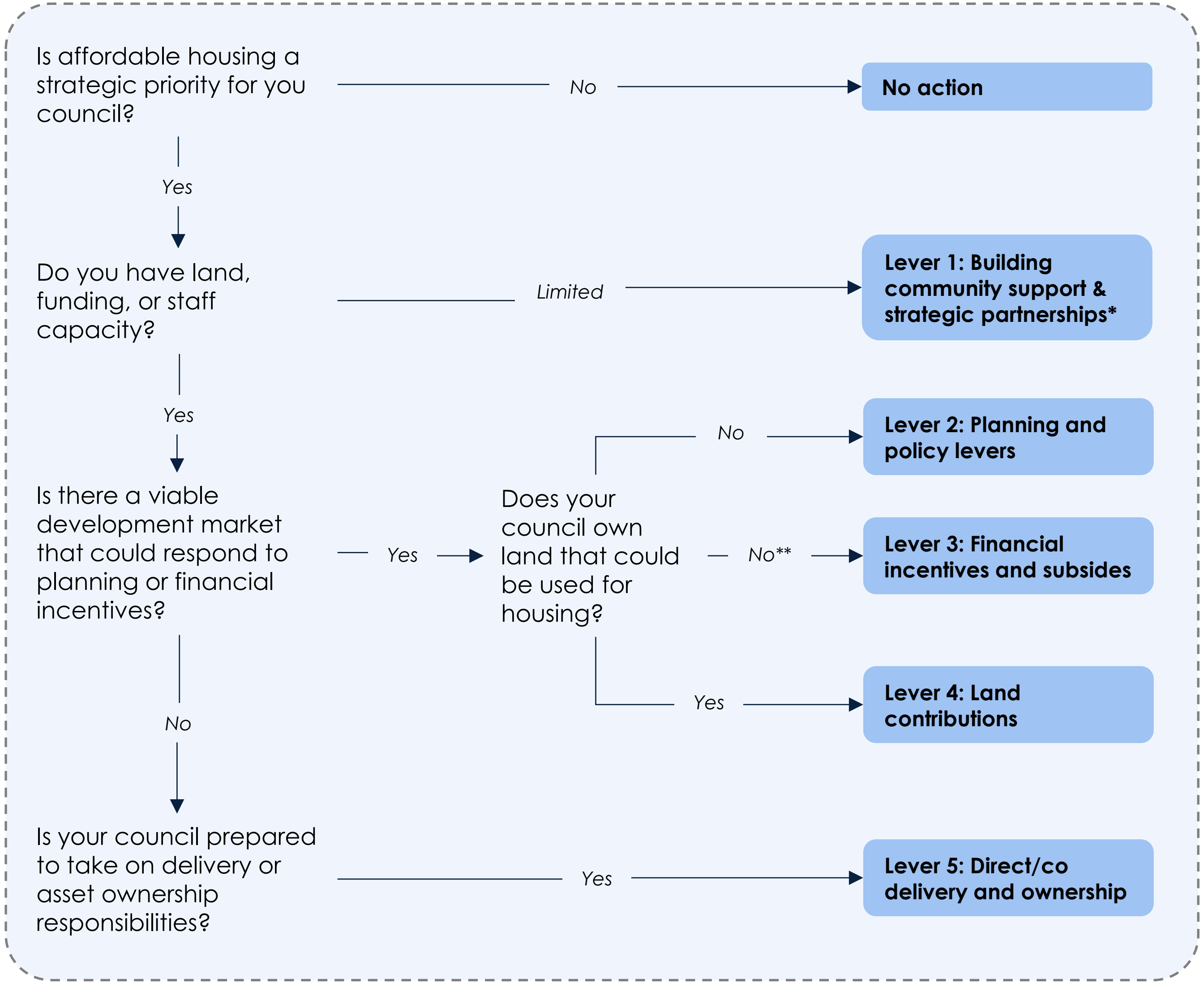
This isn't about doing everything. It's about doing what's possible and doing it well. Like all government work, it's a process. Councils must weigh risks, costs, and community benefits to determine the best path forward.

The decision flow chart illustrates some high-level questions to guide internal conversations and shape your council's approach to affordable housing delivery.

How far are we willing to go?

What resources do we have?

What risks are we prepared to take on?



** Note that Lever 1 can be undertaken alongside other levers*

*** Note that this relates to where council does not have land but is willing to provide other financial incentives including but not limited to foregoing development fees and charges*

Section 3: Resources and Links

Further detailed guidance

Local councils have access to a range of resources that provide practical guidance on how to use planning, funding and partnership levers to support the delivery of affordable housing. The table below brings together key reports and fact sheets from CHIA NSW, CHIA Vic and ALGA, outlining available tools, case studies and detailed implementation advice. Each entry includes a link to the full resource for further information.

Resource	Description	Link
Local Government Affordable Housing Resource Bank (CHIA NSW, 2023)	Outlines levers councils can use (e.g. discounted land, planning incentives, contribution schemes, joint ventures) and provides eight NSW council case studies (Central Coast, Canada Bay, Parramatta, Sydney, Griffith, Penrith, Randwick, Shoalhaven).	Link
Partnering with community housing providers (CHIA, NSW)	Outlines additional case studies in NSW where local councils have worked with CHPs to deliver affordable housing.	Link
Local Councils taking action on affordable housing (CHIA NSW, 2022)	Highlights actions councils have taken, such as planning mechanisms, contribution schemes, and partnerships with CHPs. Includes examples and outcomes.	Link
Local Councils partnerships for the provision of affordable housing (CHIA NSW, 2022)	Describes how councils and CHPs have worked in partnership to deliver affordable housing, with illustrative case studies and practical examples.	Link
Local Government Affordable Housing Programs: Options and Opportunities (CHIA NSW, 2023)	Provides detailed options and opportunities for councils to design and implement affordable housing programs, including case studies and key program elements.	Link
Affordable Housing Agreements – Local Government Fact Sheet (Victoria CHIA, 2020)	Guidance for councils on advocacy, planning mechanisms, investment of land/funds, and partnerships to enable affordable housing.	Link
Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Fact Sheet (2022)	Explains how councils can use SPVs to secure affordable housing contributions on council land or via planning agreements, including governance and risks.	Link
2024 National General Assembly Listening Report (ALGA, 2024)	Summarises local government discussions on housing and community infrastructure, with emphasis on collaboration and funding mechanisms.	Link
2025 National General Assembly Listening Report (ALGA, 2025)	Summarises local government discussions on housing and community infrastructure, with emphasis on collaboration and funding mechanisms.	Link

State by state assessment of land contribution levers

State-by-state summary of council land sale legislation for affordable housing. Please check your relevant state/territory legislation (listed below) for statutory requirements or obligations for selling or leasing council land for affordable housing projects.

State/Territory	Relevant Legislation
NSW	Local Government Act 1993 (NSW)
VIC	Local Government Act 2020 (VIC)
QLD	Local Government Regulation 2012 (QLD)
WA	Local Government Act 1995 (WA)
SA	Local Government Act 1999 (SA)
TAS	Local Government Act 1993 (TAS)
ACT	Planning and Development Act 2007 (ACT)
NT	Local Government Act 2019 (NT)

Glossary

Term / Acronym	Definition
Affordable housing	Housing appropriate for very low, low and moderate-income households, with costs that allow other living expenses to be met.
Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme (AHCS)	Planning mechanism requiring developers to contribute dwellings or cash toward affordable housing in defined areas.
Advocacy and coordination	Council actions to influence housing outcomes by setting priorities, engaging stakeholders and seeking funding.
Australian Local Government Association (ALGA)	National peak body representing local councils; co-author of this guide.
Case study	An example from a specific council showing practical application of a lever or tool.
Community Housing Provider (CHP)	Not-for-profit housing organisation that develops, owns or manages affordable and social housing.
Australia Community Housing (ACH)	Peak body for CHPs; provides guidance, research and advocacy on affordable housing.
Development Application (DA)	Formal application for planning consent lodged with a council.
Development Control Plan (DCP)	Council document setting detailed planning and design rules supporting the LEP.
Direct delivery and ownership	When a council directly develops and retains ownership of affordable housing, often with a CHP managing tenants.
Enabling infrastructure	Essential works such as roads, utilities and services that make a housing site viable.
Floor Space Ratio (FSR)	Ratio of total building floor area to the size of the land parcel; used in planning incentives.

Term / Acronym	Definition
Housing Australia (HA)	Federal body administering funding and policy for housing programs.
Housing Australia Future Fund (HAFF)	National fund generating investment income to support affordable housing projects.
Inclusionary zoning	Planning provisions requiring a portion of new developments to be affordable housing.
Joint venture	Formal arrangement between a council, CHP or private partner to jointly deliver housing.
Land contribution	Council action to enable housing through sale, transfer or lease of council-owned land.
Land lease	Long-term agreement where a council retains land ownership but leases it for affordable housing.
Local Environmental Plan (LEP)	Statutory plan guiding land use and development in a council area.
Local Government Area (LGA)	Geographic boundary governed by a local council.
Local Housing Strategy (LHS)	Council plan outlining housing needs and priorities, including affordable housing targets.
Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS)	Council's 20-year land use vision and strategic planning priorities.
Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV)	Separate legal entity set up to hold land or deliver a housing project, isolating risk and responsibilities.
Strategic planning	Long-term council planning to shape growth, land use and housing outcomes.
Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA)	Negotiated legal agreement where a developer provides public benefits (e.g. affordable housing) in exchange for planning consent or concessions.

POLIS PARTNERS