



Hawkesbury City Council

Hawkesbury City Council  
Policy

Affordable Housing  
Policy

Adopted by Council at the  
Ordinary Meeting Held on  
14 July 2015



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### 1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to increase the supply of affordable housing (including affordable rental housing) in serviced residential areas of the town centres of the Hawkesbury Local Government Area (LGA).

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

- The Hawkesbury Homelessness Action Plan
- The Hawkesbury Residential Land Strategy
- State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009
- Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan 2013-2032 (CSP).

### 2.0 BACKGROUND

On July 29 2014, Council adopted the Hawkesbury Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP). One of the actions of the HHAP was to develop an Affordable Housing Policy for the (LGA).

Council reports of the Hawkesbury area have identified the steady decline over recent decades in housing that is affordable to families and individuals on low to medium incomes for purchase or in the private or social rental housing sectors. House prices and private rentals are rapidly increasing both in this LGA and across Greater Western Sydney. Stable housing is identified<sup>i</sup> as a necessary pre-requisite for improved outcomes in employment, education, and the well-being and development of children and young people.

The number of NSW owned social housing properties (for low income and disadvantaged tenants) in this LGA has declined significantly<sup>ii</sup> and at a faster rate than social housing in Greater Western Sydney.

The rise in *Lone Person Households* and the increase in smaller family size in this area are expected to continue which will require an increase in smaller housing properties to accommodate the changing needs of the community.

Vacancy rates in the private rental market are expected to remain very low (between 1% to 2% vacancy) which will add further pressure to the availability of affordable housing for low to middle income families in the private rental market.

The gap between household income and the cost of housing continues to widen<sup>iii</sup> with Hawkesbury households in the Lowest and Medium Lowest Income Quartiles seeing the greatest negative growth.

The continuing decline of affordable housing will negatively impact on the liveability for purchasers and renters in the low to middle income brackets leading to greater housing stress and homelessness for an increasing number of families and individuals.

The Hawkesbury Community Strategic Plan 2013-2032 (CSP) has defined what Council would like to achieve in regard to communities and housing:

- People & Place (Vision Statement): "A community in which the area's character is preserved and lifestyle choices are provided with sustainable, planned, well serviced development, within strongly connected, safe and friendly neighbourhoods."
- Direction 2 (D2): "Offer residents a choice of housing options that meets their needs whilst being sympathetic to the qualities of the Hawkesbury."
- Direction 6 (D6): "Have friendly neighbourhood, connected communities, and supported households and families."
- Strategy 2 (S2): "Encourage affordable, diverse and quality housing solutions in serviced areas."



#### 3.0 SCOPE

The Hawkesbury Residential Land Strategy identifies areas for quality affordable housing in well serviced areas.

Strategies should be linked to those areas that have good access to a range of essential services and facilities (shops, schools, medical services, transport etc.).

As a *Guiding Principle*, social and affordable housing projects should be located within 800 metres of well serviced residential towns (as indicated in the Hawkesbury Residential Land Strategy). The areas include: Windsor/South Windsor, Richmond, North Richmond, and urban release areas within 800 metres of a train station.

#### 4.0 DEFINITIONS

- **Affordable housing** refers to housing (primarily rental housing) that is not more than 30% of the income of families and individuals in the lowest 40% of incomes.
- **Housing Stress** refers to households in the lowest 40% of incomes who are paying more than 30% of their income on housing costs.
- **Social Housing** covers rental housing provided by the government and/or by a community housing provider targeted for low income or disadvantaged households where the tenant usually pays no more than 25% of their income in rent.

#### 5.0 RELATED LEGISLATION/POLICY

- Reform of the Federation White Paper - Roles and Responsibilities in Housing and Homelessness
- Senate Inquiry into Affordable Housing in Australia
- NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing
- Australian Building Standards and Codes
- A Plan for Growing Sydney, NSW Department of Planning and Environment

#### 6.0 STRATEGIES

Hawkesbury City Council will, as part of council's commitment to the HHAP, undertake the following strategies/activities for affordable housing for the Hawkesbury Area:

- Recognise and monitor demographic trends, housing demand supply and affordability
- develop appropriate strategies aimed at increasing affordable housing supply
- advocate for increased affordable housing in suitable locations
- work in partnership with key stakeholders and agencies to increase affordable housing options
- review Council policies, plans and fees and charges in order to increase opportunities for affordable housing
- support government initiatives that increase the supply and understanding of the need for affordable housing
- support and contribute to research initiatives that explore affordable housing options and increase the understanding of the need for affordable housing.

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<sup>i</sup> Australian Government White Paper (2014), Issues Paper 2: Reform of the Federation – Affordable Housing and Homelessness

<sup>ii</sup> ABS Census of Population and Housing, 1991 to 2011

<sup>iii</sup> Hawkesbury Profile, Change in Household Income Quartile