



## POPULATION STRATEGY DISCUSSION PAPER SUBMISSION SHELTER TAS, MARCH 2023



GPO Box 848 Hobart Tasmania 7001 | [www.sheltertass.org.au](http://www.sheltertass.org.au)  
E: [ceo@sheltertass.org.au](mailto:ceo@sheltertass.org.au) | P: (03)6224 5488 | M: 0419 536 100

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Shelter Tasmania acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Tasmania and their continuing connection to the land, sea and community. We pay our respects to them and their cultures, and to elders past and present.



Shelter Tas welcomes and supports people of diverse genders and sexual orientations.

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**3 March 2023**

By email to [consultation@stategrowth.tas.gov.au](mailto:consultation@stategrowth.tas.gov.au)

## **About Shelter Tas**

Shelter Tas is Tasmania's peak body for housing and homelessness services. We are an independent not-for-profit organisation representing the interests of low to moderate income housing consumers, Community Housing Providers and Specialist Homelessness Services across Tasmania. We provide an independent voice on housing rights and a link between governments and the community through consultation, research and policy advice. We work towards a fairer and more just housing system. Our vision is affordable, appropriate, safe and secure housing for all Tasmanians, and an end to homelessness.

## **Our submission**

Shelter Tas welcomes the opportunity to respond to the *Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy Consultation Paper*.

## **Housing and the Population Strategy**

The link between housing, employment and a strong economy is well known. Tasmania is now facing a housing crisis, with a chronic shortage of affordable homes to rent. As the *Consultation Paper* acknowledges, an effective population strategy needs to consider current and future housing need.

A lack of affordable and secure housing options limits the ability of workers to easily move between regions and undermines the efficiency of the labour market. Even within regions, the instability, stress and logistical challenges facing workers who are unhoused severely curtails their ability to engage in paid work.<sup>1</sup>

Housing, and especially the importance of addressing unmet housing need for households on low incomes, is a key issue for Tasmania's future population planning, especially for liveability, workforce participation, and attracting and retaining families.

## **Housing in all policies**

For some years, Shelter Tas has called for a 'housing in all policies' approach, across all areas of government.<sup>2</sup> Population, employment, and tourism are some of the key policy areas that affect demand for, and use of, Tasmania's residential accommodation. Health, education, and justice all are impacted when people cannot find or afford the homes they need. All policy areas

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<sup>1</sup> <https://everybodyshome.com.au/resources/housing-criticalthe-role-of-housing-in-solving-critical-skill-shortages-across-the-regions/>

<sup>2</sup> See for example, our annual submissions to the State Budget Process. Our most recent budget submission is available at <https://sheltertass.org.au/shelter-tas-submission-to-the-state-government-budget-process-2023-2024/>

can have a bearing on housing and a 'Housing in all Policies' approach is the best way to recognise and manage these impacts. We welcome the inclusion of housing as a key area in the *Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy Consultation Paper*.

Good planning is essential to ensure that all Tasmanians can find the homes they need, including facilitating an adequate supply of social and affordable homes. With the current twenty-year *Tasmanian Housing Strategy (2022-2042)* now under development, it is essential to include supporting the construction of social and affordable housing as an urgent priority.

As Tasmania's population grows and changes, the Population Strategy can work towards enabling every Tasmanian to have access to housing that is:

- affordable — people should not be living in poverty after they have met their housing costs
- adequate — everybody is entitled to housing that meets basic standards of decency and their own basic needs
- secure — people should not live under a threat of loss of home and shelter
- accessible — access to housing should be free from discrimination and conform with universal design principles, at a minimum
- in the right place — housing should be located close to transport, services and support networks, job opportunities, and social and leisure activities
- able to meet their lifecycle needs — people have different housing needs at different stages of their lives, and housing should be available to meet these changing needs.

Shelter Tas agrees that "health, belonging and happiness" are key success factors for the *Population Strategy*, and we note that these can only be achieved when people have the housing they need. Monitoring and evidence of the interface between population and housing will be essential for ensuring that Tasmania "achieves safe and inclusive communities" (*Consultation Paper* p 2).

Tasmania, like other parts of Australia, faces the key challenge of a chronic shortage of affordable rental options for people on low and moderate incomes. Tasmania has seen unprecedented growth in both purchase prices and rental prices. Hobart has been Australia's least affordable capital city since 2018, on the standard measure that compares income to rental cost.<sup>3</sup> Hobart has, indeed, been in the top two capitals for unaffordable rentals since the National Rental Affordability Index began in 2015. This chronic lack of affordable rental housing leads to increasing numbers of people experiencing housing stress and homelessness across the State.

The latest report on housing market trends from the University of Tasmania's Housing and Community Research Unit (HACRU) shows that Tasmania's housing market continues to be

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.sgsep.com.au/projects/rental-affordability-index>

under extreme pressure.<sup>4</sup> House prices and rents remain high, while the private rental vacancy rate remains very low. Increasing the supply of affordable and social rental housing is essential to meet the housing needs of all Tasmanians, as well as the State Government's economic and social objectives.

### **Managing short stay accommodation**

As Tasmania's population increases, it is essential to provide enough homes to meet people's needs. To achieve this, Tasmania needs to manage the increasing use of residential homes as short stay visitor accommodation. For further discussion, see research reports linked below.<sup>5</sup>

### **Measures and indicators**

Our national peak body, National Shelter has developed a set of measures and indicators relating to housing and well-being, which are well suited to informing the Tasmanian population strategy and its implementation plans.<sup>6</sup> We would be happy to assist in adapting these insights to the Tasmanian context. We note that the paper specifically identifies ways to monitor the situation for renter households, which will be extremely useful in Tasmania, where over one quarter of households are renting.

Thank you for the opportunity to contribute to the consultation on the *Refreshing Tasmania's Population Strategy Consultation Paper*. Planning for and monitoring the supply of social and affordable rental housing is essential for good housing and wellbeing outcomes for all Tasmanians, and for a successful population strategy.

Please note other relevant submissions by Shelter Tas are available on our website at <https://sheltertass.org.au/resources/papers-and-reports-2/>.

For any further information on this submission, please contact:



Pattie Chugg  
Chief Executive Officer, Shelter Tas  
[ceo@sheltertass.org.au](mailto:ceo@sheltertass.org.au)

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<sup>4</sup> [https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf\\_file/0005/1475465/UOTBR210619-Tasmanian-Housing-Update\\_vFinal.pdf](https://www.utas.edu.au/data/assets/pdf_file/0005/1475465/UOTBR210619-Tasmanian-Housing-Update_vFinal.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <https://sheltertass.org.au/monitoring-the-impact-of-short-term-rentals-on-tasmanian-housing-markets-baseline-report/>  
<https://sheltertass.org.au/monitoring-the-impact-of-short-term-rentals-on-tasmanian-housing-markets-1st-update-since-june-2022-baseline-report-dec-2022/>

<sup>6</sup> [https://mcusercontent.com/5a2465b67ad0e1b417f153361/files/325062c0-a436-fa09-8bcf-eb6e5f7d8337/20230131\\_Submission\\_Measuring\\_What\\_Matters\\_National\\_Shelter\\_1.0.pdf](https://mcusercontent.com/5a2465b67ad0e1b417f153361/files/325062c0-a436-fa09-8bcf-eb6e5f7d8337/20230131_Submission_Measuring_What_Matters_National_Shelter_1.0.pdf) This paper was provided as a submission to the Federal Treasury *Measuring What Matters* inquiry in October 2022.