

06

Key Worker Housing

6.1 WHO ARE KEY WORKERS?

While Victoria does not have a definition for key workers, other jurisdictions in Australia adopt the definition used in the United Kingdom as follows:

An employee who provides a vital service, especially in the essential services, health, or education sectors.

In Anglesea, this includes:

- Providers of services to residents – e.g., teachers, doctors, nurses, healthcare workers, pharmacists, Council staff.
- Workers in key local industries – e.g., agriculture and associated industries, and construction.
- Growth industries – e.g. workers to solar farms and associated upgrade of transmission.

The inclusion of workers in local industries is appropriate because, in regional areas, these workers are essential to the economic activities of the region.

6.1.1 Key Workers' Needs

In simple terms, key workers require housing that:

- Is available for long term rental in accordance with the Residential Tenancy Act.
- Can be rented at rental rates no more than 30% of their income.
- Is of an acceptable quality.
- Is in proximity to places of employment and amenities.
- For seasonal workers - availability of housing at the right times.

6.2 WHAT IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING?

Through its involvement in the [Key and Essential Worker Housing Supply Action Plan](#), Surf Coast Shire has adopted the definition of affordable housing definition outlined below. This definition expands the Victorian Government's definition of affordable housing to encompass both private and publicly owned housing types.

The Housing Supply Action Plan defines affordable housing as:

Housing that is owned or rented, that is occupied by households in the lower 60 per cent of the income distribution scale and/or an identified key worker in the region providing housing choices, which are of appropriate size, liveable, affordable to occupy, accessible, secure in tenure and located in good proximity to employment services and critical infrastructure such as transport.

The housing can be:

- ***Private home ownership where the purchaser's mortgage costs do not exceed 35 per cent of the gross household income of the occupant***
- ***Rental housing that is owned and managed by private individuals or corporations and where rent does not exceed 30 per cent of the income of the gross household occupant***
- ***Rental housing that is owned and managed by the state housing authority***
- ***Rental housing that is owned or managed by a not for profit housing organisation***

6.3 WHY IS AFFORDABLE HOUSING IMPORTANT?

A diverse range of dwelling types, tenures and price points is essential to ensure that all parts of a community can access housing that is appropriate to their needs and is affordable within their household income.

Shortages of appropriate and affordable housing (including all tenures of housing) acts as a constraint on economic growth and can prevent workers from fully participating in economic and social opportunities. This can occur when people are priced out of living in the local community or simply cannot find housing and are forced to choose between commuting long distances to jobs or, potentially, foregoing work if they cannot obtain local housing.

Regional areas like Surf Coast Shire are subject to unique housing constraints and barriers that stop access to affordable housing including:

- Availability and cost of housing
- Quality of housing
- Seasonality – need for quality housing options for seasonal workers
- Shortage of permanent rentals

6.3.1 Housing in the Surf Coast

The Surf Coast faces particular housing challenges as:

- The region has experienced minimal growth in housing stock
- There is a high proportion of unoccupied and underutilised dwellings that are now short-term rentals or holiday homes, particularly in tourism destinations
- There is a strong correlation between high house prices and holiday homes across the region.
- The decrease in the number of available rental properties means key workers are less likely to access suitable rental properties within the region
- The increase in median rent indicates a lack of supply of rental properties across the region
- A portion of Anglesea workforce is travelling large distances for employment
- The cost of developing land and buildings in some locations is such that it does not allow for commercial returns.

6.4 HOUSING AFFORDABILITY IN ANGLESEA

There is an identifiable need for lower cost housing in Anglesea to support its Key Workers.

6.4.1 High House Prices and Rents

The most recent data from the Victorian Valuer General from June 2022 shows that Anglesea experienced growth in house prices from \$1,350,000 in June 2021 to \$1,610,000 in June 2022. This follows an escalation from \$863,000 in June 2020 to \$1,350,000 in June 2021 - a 53% increase but over 100% in a 2 year period.

Median rent in Anglesea has grown from \$375 per week in 2015 to \$540 in 2022. The number of dwellings available as long-term rentals has fallen from 221 in 2014 to 203 in 2022.

6.4.2 Constrained Property Supply

According to 2016 figures, Anglesea has a higher level household ownership (51.4%) than the rest of Victoria (35.7%). The August 2021 ABS Census reported that 61% of dwellings in Anglesea were unoccupied on Census Night.

Both figures are likely reflections of the high number of holiday homes in the Anglesea region.

Similarly, the Homes Victoria [Rental Report](#) for December 2022 noted that there was a total of 3 affordable rental properties across the entire Surf Coast Shire.

With a severely reduced supply of properties available for rent, there is little capacity to provide badly needed homes for the community's key workers.

6.4.3 The Impact of Affordability on Anglesea

As far back as 2012, the Anglesea Structure Plan identified the lack of affordable housing as a pressing issue. The Council's 2021 Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan acknowledged the lack of affordable residential accommodation being a major obstacle for the local economy and sustainability of the local community.

With Anglesea facing a key worker crisis, this master plan project will not solve the problem, but through the inclusion of a component of key worker housing, the plan can assist in alleviating the problem.

6.5 WHY IS COUNCIL SUPPORTING KEY WORKER AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITHIN THE MCMILLAN STREET PRECINCT?

The introduction of key worker affordable housing on a community oriented site such understandably brings with it complexity.

As highlighted earlier, key workers are considered integral to both the economy and fabric of the local community. Key workers keep the wheels moving on essential services such as health and education but also ensure that basic economic activity such as retail and hospitality can continue to ensure a community's vibrancy, dynamism and resilience.

For this reason, the Council considers that using part of this community and health focussed site for the provision of [housing for key workers](#) aligns with the site's overall role and purpose.

This is further supported in the following Council policies and Council-led strategies, as highlighted in [Section 3.2](#) above:

- [Anglesea Structure Plan 2012](#)
- [Council Plan and Health and Wellbeing Plan 2021-2025](#)
- [Surf Coast Shire Economic Strategy 2021](#)
- [Surf Coast Shire Affordable Accommodation Action Plan 2022](#)
- Victorian Planning Authority and Surf Coast Shire Council's [Key and Essential Worker Housing Supply Action Plan 2020](#)

- Surf Coast Shire's 2021 declaration of a [Key Worker Accommodation Crisis](#)

Furthermore, the provision of affordable housing for key workers in Anglesea will enhance the town's long term economic prospects. Investor and business community confidence will be provided by demonstrating the town's mechanism to capture and retain key workers. In doing so, potentially brokering a pipeline of suitable growth projects and securing longer term private investment in the town and the wider region.

It is of course appreciated that the Site alone will not address the key worker housing crisis in the region. Longer term and larger scale solutions will be needed as well and will necessitate a multi-service, multi-agency approach.

Given, however that the Site is already home to a myriad of services and agencies it is considered a fine candidate to establish a model that can test the multi-party approach to tackling the key worker housing challenge.

Moreover, an integrated health and community hub integrated with multi-purpose facilities and open space, as well as a dedicated key worker housing will deliver many and diverse economic benefits, including boosting employment and driving regional economic growth and prosperity; and improving liveability in Anglesea.



ANGLE FREE HARVEST *Leave Your Excess, Take What You Need.*

Anglefree Harvest

Welcome to our community food share.
Our aim is to reduce food waste through sharing excess fresh food.
This is a space to share your home grown produce, vegetables, fruit, herbs, seeds, homemade jams and relishes...
Please put a note in our user's book of time and date you leave produce.
Leave the goods in baskets or in cupboard.
We appreciate you leaving this place tidy.
Join the "Anglefree Harvest" facebook page and share messages when you leave anything for others to see.

Take what you need
and any surplus produce you have
is most welcome

ANGLEFREE HARVEST
PLEASE NAME A NOTE AND
DATE WHEN YOU LEAVE
PRODUCE
DON'T FORGET TO POST ON
OUR FACEBOOK PAGE