

Lorne Housing Solutions. Your Questions Answered

15.06.23

These will get updated and modified as we go along. Send us ideas, extra information and feedback to committee@friendsoflorne.org.au. Or use the comments section of the main webpage.

Q1. What is the size of the problem? How many people (on average) require accommodation and what is the ratio of worker accom. required?

A Council survey of 71 coastal businesses in August 2021 asked respondents to estimate the number of their staff that would need short term accommodation in peak times. The total number of staff requiring accommodation in Lorne during peak periods was 178.

2021 Census data indicates that 19% of Lorne's workers travel over 100km to get to work. 9.4% employees travel between 50 and <100km to get to work. 11.8% travelled between 10 and <50kms. Only 33.6% workers travelled <10k to get to work.

Q2. If existing farm properties were opened up for seasonal workers (subject to Council approval), might the Lorne traders be willing to run a mini bus within say 5km radius of Lorne to transport workers?

We will put this question about the bus to the Lorne Business and Tourism Association. There may be other transport options too. We'll re-check with Cr Gary Allen.

Q3. I think that we seem to focus on mainly on 'seasonal' workers or workers without families who are generally only looking to live in Lorne for 1-3 years. We need to focus on what Leon is saying and more families and young couples who are wanting to live in Lorne for 5 + years and make it their permanent home.

You are right. The Surf Coast Shire tells us that a 2021 business survey indicated that 75% of Lorne based businesses believe the key worker accommodation is a year-round issue.

A lot of the [Committee for Lorne report](#) is focussed on this. There is consensus that we need to address both issues – seasonal and permanent worker needs. Not one at the expense of the other.

Q4. How about the Shire be a housing bank? They buy a house/s then the family will pay instalments in cheaper loans back to the shire so they live in the house for extended permanent time.

The occupancy must live in the house for say 10+ years or longer.

A later comment in the chat shows that there are people in Lorne working in the banking sector who could advise and share experience on this. We'll follow up on that.

Meantime, ways of financing (eligible) people into houses or flats through joint equity schemes is the topic of the next online community meeting. You could check out a 2-minute video that explains one home purchasing scheme operating in inner city Sydney called [Hope Housing](#). It would be great to

have it have it available here. It would need to operate regionally (ie., larger than Lorne) to be viable. But Lorne would get an allocation of places (eg, 10-15 families might be financed this way). That said, the model has critics because it accepts, rather than tackles, rising property prices (although the house always stays affordable for the worker/homeowner concerned). Critics of models like *Hope Housing* have set up Community Lands Trusts where the house is kept perpetually affordable (owned by the Trust) and people move in and out of that house. We will hear about those schemes too.

Q5. Two full time staff members of either the hospital or school are going to be over \$100,000 combined income but cannot afford a \$2M mortgage in Lorne and wouldn't qualify for affordable housing (as defined within the state government parameter). That's where a national housing policy that prioritises housing as a human right rather than an investment would be a great step forward.

The definition of affordable housing is given in the PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT ACT 1987 - SECT 3AA and 3AB. Eligibility is based on 'very low', 'low' and 'moderate income' ranges as specified in the Victoria Government Gazette: In regional areas, a moderate income for a single is less than \$45,640 and for a family is less than \$95,840.

So, yes. You are right. The Surf Coast Shire Council has drawn the state government's attention to the regional income thresholds. Because they render approximately 50% of local key workers ineligible.

Fortunately, that is where the Community Lands Trust idea comes in. A CLT can set its own threshold levels for eligibility. Also, private market models like *Hope Housing* operate in high-price markets (like inner city Sydney) where, provided that the eligible purchaser has some funds to contribute, the rest is contributed by the co-investors. We need to find out how the money works (ie. what is the usual contribution made a teacher, police officer, nurse etc) in these high-price markets.

Louise Crabtree-Hayes also sent us a follow-up email saying:

“The point that I didn't get to make is that once you have a CLT, it can then partner with Community Housing Providers (CHPs) like *Housing Choices*. It's not that a CLT is for some people and CHPs are for others - a CLT can offer all tenure options, so if affordable rentals are needed, it can put out a call for Eols that CHPs can respond to.

CLT homeownership can be tailored to be accessible for higher incomes than CHPs, but that doesn't mean homeownership is all they do, or that moderate income people are the only people they serve.

The point is, the CLT can be the basis for any type of development and the bigger it is, the more of a voice the community has in terms of housing options and development outcomes.”

Q6 What are the stumbling blocks to get a CLT up and running?

We've asked someone who has set up one in a Queensland resort town to share his experience with us at the next on-line meeting (likely to be late July). We want to know how long it took him. What finance he needed. Where it came from. How the numbers work to make it viable. How the eligibility works etc

You can also check out some resources produced by Louise Crabtree-Hayes and her team

- [The Community Land Trust Manual](#) – Vol 1 (2013) – Louise Crabtree et al.

- [CLT Start Up Primer](#) – Crabtree et al.
- [Principles and Practices of an Affordable Housing CLT model](#) – Crabtree et al.
- [CLT Decision Making Toolkit](#) – Crabtree et al.
- [CLT Decision Making Toolkit – Existing Community Housing Provider](#) – Crabtree et al.
- [CLT Decision Making Tool for Startups](#) – Crabtree et al.

Q7 It is all very well having the community input, but we need more than just verbal support from council & other bodies to relax some of the bureaucratic obstructions to opening up more spaces for this to happen.

True. But it would not be right to say that the Council isn't helping. They have helped facilitate the solutions that Leon talked about. There are people working to see more "removal of barriers" when it comes to seasonal worker accommodation, so that whatever informal arrangements of the past are made "formal" (ie., within the accommodation regulations). Council are also actively helping in the search for land or existing buildings for redevelopment. They helped set up this community meeting and the research going in around it to identify solutions. If Lorne seeks the sort of funding that other towns have received, they will likely help then too. We can encourage more reporting on these things. People may have been thinking nothing has been happening, but in fact, lots has, but we need more.

Q8 I do hope this issue will be discussed in the meeting. Another staff accommodation option might be to form a clear sensible tiny house policy in the hinterland. As a Deans Marsh resident this is something I would be seriously interested in but there is no permanent nor clear answer that I know about. Am not interested in what is or was the sort of tiny house policy, which requires the tiny house to be removed when granny dies as was true for granny flat option in my area in the past.

Strap in. This is a long answer.

The Surf Coast Shire is exploring the permit conditions that could potentially be set under a local law to enable Tiny Houses on Wheels to reside on private property. See [Council to trial domestic use of tiny houses on wheels - Surf Coast Shire](#)

Council has also been advocating for the reinstatement of the Victorian State Government's Secondary Dwelling Pilot and Code.

The pilot was initiated on 27 August 2020, through the introduction of VC186 (a planning amendment) to the planning schemes of Greater Bendigo, Kingston, Moreland (now Merri-bek) and Murrindindi. The seven-month pilot program of the Secondary Dwelling Code in these four municipalities was meant to inform the implementation of a key Plan Melbourne policy to provide greater choice and diversity housing throughout Victoria.

The pilot and code is designed to facilitate the development of small-scale secondary dwellings such as "garden studios" or "granny flats" on the same lot as an existing principal dwelling. The pilot acknowledged the need for more flexible housing choices to enable extended families to live together, couples to downsize or create additional affordable rental opportunities for the community. The pilot Code enabled the construction of secondary dwellings in the Mixed Use, Township, Residential Growth, General Residential and Neighbourhood Residential Zones.

Due to COVID, the uptake of the pilot was low and the any plans to extend the pilot and code to other municipalities were put on hold. On 8 March 2022 Amendment VC209 was gazetted. This facilitated the end of the Secondary Dwelling Pilot Program by deleting clause 51.06 (Secondary dwelling) from the Victoria Planning Provisions and the Greater Bendigo, Kingston, Moreland and Murrindindi planning schemes.

Seeing that you mention it, here is a note on Dependent Person Unit (DPU) planning scheme provision

<https://www.housing.vic.gov.au/movable-units-home-owners>

In practice, a DPU provides a diverse and affordable housing option for people with increasing accessibility and inclusivity needs, including older people and people with disabilities. In accordance with the government's planning policy framework, a DPU commonly does not require a planning permit for either use or development. Under clause 62.02 of Victorian planning schemes, a DPU is exempt from the need for a planning permit for buildings and works unless specifically required by another provision of the scheme. This can be contrasted with a second dwelling on a lot that is not a DPU, where a planning permit will often be required, or where specific design and/or siting requirements apply.

For example, Surf Coast Shire Planning Scheme General Residential Zone Clause 32.08-2, Table of uses. DPU is in Section 1 of the table of use which is 'permit not required', as long as the following condition is met 'Must be the only dependent person's unit on the lot'.

Interesting VCAT case <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/viewdoc/au/cases/vic/VCAT/2021/94.html> which highlights that regulatory reform regarding DPUs is required.

Other comments made, kept here for noting and/or follow up.

- Bank Australia (member owned) has done some terrific work on lending arrangements in the ACT and disability sector including share arrangements; environment sustainability requirements part of the solution
- The hinterland is an important part of the solution
- Are we a bit spoilt in not embracing higher densities - particularly 2-3 story development around activity centres?
- In terms of seasonal workers, the Santa Monica campus (near Big hill) for St Bernard's College could be an option to explore. A bus shuttle would be required although the accommodation would be ideal.
- Also, the Bendigo Bank should be asked for input.
- I believe - more places, more affordable - childcare is part of this tangled web - good for kids, good for parents, attracts young families, frees up workers and volunteers, ...