

## Inquiry into Homelessness in Victoria

Mr David Hall

**Organisation Name:** Safe Place, a community group

**Your position or role:** Convenor

### SURVEY QUESTIONS

**Drag the statements below to reorder them. In order of priority, please rank the themes you believe are most important for this inquiry into homelessness to consider::**

Housing affordability, Public housing, Family violence, Mental health, Rough sleeping, Services, Indigenous people, Employment

**What best describes your interest in our Inquiry? (select all that apply) :**

Concerned citizen

**Are there any additional themes we should consider?**

### YOUR SUBMISSION

**Submission:**

Please see attached file.

**Do you have any additional comments or suggestions?:**

### FILE ATTACHMENTS

**File1:** [5e6a045dcb191-Safe Place Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Homelessness-as submitted.pdf](#)

**File2:**

**File3:**

**Signature:**

David Hall

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry on Homelessness

12 March 2020

**From:** David Hall, Convenor, Safe Place – A Community Group working to secure affordable housing in Hepburn Shire, [REDACTED]

### Summary:

Safe Place believes that a radical simplification of the regulatory environment is both feasible and would harness the willingness of many members of our community to contribute to solving the problem of homelessness.

### Status of Homelessness in Hepburn Shire

- Hepburn Shire's need for Social and Affordable Housing is above the average for Victoria and very little such housing is available in the Shire.
- Statistics obtained via Child and Family Services [CAFS] staff in Daylesford indicate that in 2017-2018, just over 100 adults and children sought assistance from CAFS to find suitable housing. Most of the 60 adults were women (78%) and most of these were in the age range of 26-55 and had children with them.

### Social, economic and policy factors that impact on homelessness in Hepburn Shire

- **Economic:** Suitable, affordable housing is extremely difficult to find in Daylesford due to the high property values and the typical use of much housing for tourist accommodation. As an example, a single mother with children who is without employment and is renting in Daylesford is paying \$350/week for a small home. This is well over the limit of 30% of her income needed to keep her out of housing stress.
- **Policy:** At present Hepburn Shire Council does not have a policy regarding social and affordable housing. The lack of a policy means that there are few incentives to develop new affordable homes. However, the community group Safe Place is working with the Council to create a policy, and substantial community support exists for one. We expect a policy could include such approaches as:
  - Inclusionary zoning/value capture
  - Incentives to encourage Social and Affordable Housing in new developments
  - Incentives for existing dwellings to encourage conversion to Social and Affordable Housing
  - Rezoning/repurposing of surplus Crown land and surplus Council land
  - Encouraging innovative Social and Affordable Housing approaches such as cohousing and tiny homes
  - Facilitating communication with and/or partnerships between developers and registered housing providers
- **Social: Community Efforts to Secure Additional Affordable Homes in the Shire**
  - A small group of local residents formed a committee called 'Safe Place' to investigate the state of homelessness and potential remedies in the town of Daylesford and the Shire of Hepburn
  - After determining the need (via statistics and consultation of the local social services staff), Safe Place set out to find available land

- Following considerable discussion with the Council staff, a Council-owned piece of land was located in Trentham and determined to be suitable for the development of affordable homes in collaboration with a registered housing provider
- Safe Place began consultations with Haven; Home, Safe, a registered housing provider, to do a feasibility study for the land in Trentham and with Council staff to confirm the availability of the land. We expect the feasibility study to be ready soon and anticipate the project could deliver up to 14 homes, including a small proportion of SDAs.

### **Assistance that the State Government and Local Government Could Provide in This Matter**

- There appear to be three main issues around the increase in affordable housing in our regional community:
  - the availability of affordable land
  - the availability of finance to support the construction of new affordable housing via registered housing providers
  - the barriers created by the planning scheme to the creation of smaller footprint, smaller cost, smaller land requirement homes

Of these issues we believe that the radical simplification of the regulatory requirements at state and local level could have the most rapid effect. We believe that many in our community wish to contribute to the alleviation of homelessness in Hepburn Shire. Many homeowners would seriously consider the addition of a small home (like a granny flat) to their property – if the process to do this were not so arduous in terms of the planning process (which can take 18 months and encumber the property owner with a number of substantial and costly building issues).