

Maitland City Council

AFFORDABLE AND  
ADAPTABLE HOUSING –  
ACTION PLAN

PREPARED BY  
**Elton Consulting**

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**Disclaimer**

Elton Consulting has developed the Action Plan with information provided by Maitland City Council, as well as best possible information from Census 2011 data and input from stakeholder and community groups.

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Overview

The Draft Affordable and Adaptable Housing – Action Plan (AAHAP or Action Plan) is an outcome of the Maitland City Council Community Strategic Plan (CSP) 2011-2021. Reflecting the community's aspirations and goals for the next 10 years, the Community Strategic Plan (CSP) recognises that delivery of diverse and affordable housing options available throughout all life stages is an important focus for the residents of Maitland (refer to Figure 1).

The changing population and economic role of Maitland in the Lower Hunter region, characterised by an ageing population, increase in family households and changes in migration patterns, means that Maitland City Council is renewing its focus on the provision of affordable and adaptable housing that is integrated with the provision of employment, services and facilities across the local area.

Maitland City Council recognises it has an important role to play in facilitating affordable and adaptable housing provision and creating opportunities to influence housing outcomes. Council's traditional responsibilities in the area of affordable and adaptable housing were related to strategic land use planning and policy setting, development control, building approval and infrastructure provision. However, with housing costs on the rise, Council is seeking new ways to influence the delivery of quality housing supply, services and programs into the future.

This Action Plan is an important framework to guide Council's future decision-making in relation to many of its functions – strategic planning, development assessment, assets management, resource allocation and community planning. This Action Plan aims to provide a balanced approach that ensures housing outcomes are achieved for a variety of target groups, in a manner that has social, economic and environmental benefits for Council and the wider community.

Maitland City Council also recognises that all stakeholders have an important role to play in housing outcomes. Collaboration with the community, private sector, not-for-profit groups and all levels of government is critical to achieving Council's affordable and adaptable housing objectives. It is intended that this Action Plan will be implemented by Council, but many actions will rely on partnerships with these stakeholders as well as the NSW Government.

Council's leadership through this Action Plan is an important first step to ensuring the outcome of delivering diverse and affordable housing options can be achieved.

## 1.2 Structure

This AAHAP is structured as follows:

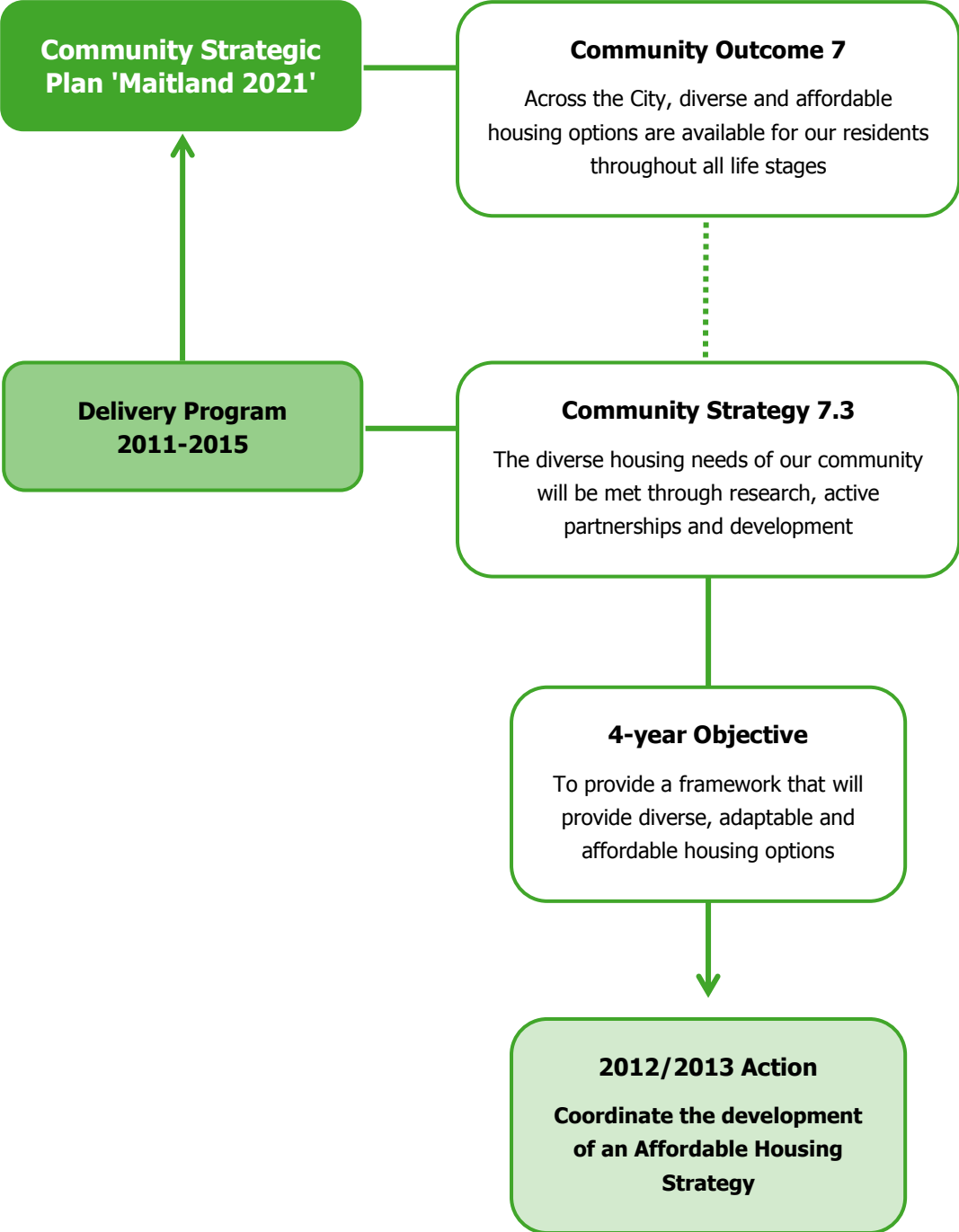
- **Section 1** provides an introduction and relevant background information
- **Section 2** defines affordable and adaptable housing and its importance
- **Section 3** provides an analysis of key population and demographic data to build understanding of the affordability and housing issues facing Maitland
- **Section 4** outlines the future population and housing growth forecast for Maitland, which is need to understand the future population that the Action Plan will target
- **Section 5** summarises the national, state and local planning frameworks that will influence the Action Plan and its implementation
- **Section 6** provides a review of the most appropriate mechanisms and options available to Council to influence affordable and adaptable housing
- **Section 7** forms the affordable and adaptable housing action plan.

This Action Plan was informed by, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Background Report to the Affordable and Adaptable Housing Action Plan* (Elton Consulting, 2013).

It has been informed by research undertaken by the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI), Hunter Valley Research Institute (HVRI), and information published by the NSW Centre for Affordable Housing such as the *Affordable Housing National Leading Practice Guide and Tool Kit* (Gurran, 2008).

It has also been informed by workshops held with key housing stakeholders in Maitland held in November 2012.

**Figure 1.** Affordable Housing priorities in Maitland 2021, Community Strategic Plan



## 2 AFFORDABLE AND ADAPTABLE HOUSING

### 2.1 What is affordable housing?

Housing affordability has gained widespread attention in recent years as more and more families – both renters and buyers – struggle to find an affordable home. The definition of affordable housing has therefore moved beyond the traditional concept of public housing and community housing (often termed 'social housing') to encompass a broader range of housing and household types.

Affordable housing means housing that is "*appropriate for the needs of a range of low and moderate-income households, priced so that households are able to meet other essential basic living costs*" (Gurran, 2008).

In turn, appropriate housing is housing that "*(i) is appropriate for a household in terms of size, quality, accessibility and location; (ii) is integrated within a reasonably diverse local community; (iii) does not incur unreasonable costs relating to maintenance, utilities and transport; and (iv) provides security of tenure and cost for a reasonable period*" (Gurran, 2008).

Low and moderate income-households are those which have incomes below 120% of the gross median income of all households in an area. These are households that are likely to require affordable housing and can be grouped into three categories:

- Very low-income households with multiple disadvantages: the need for housing assistance is likely to be significant and ongoing for these households
- Low-income households: these are households who face a housing affordability problem because they have low incomes. They may, or may not, be employed
- Moderate-income households: these are households with somewhat higher incomes (up to 120% of the median) but whose circumstances place them below the margin where they can afford market housing, especially in higher cost locations (Milligan, 2005).

Whilst this definition is useful to define certain target groups in a population, it is not a complete measure of housing affordability in an area. This is because, although a population may have a comparatively high average income, there may not be sufficient supply of the right type of housing available at an 'affordable' price point for all income groups. This means there may still be many households who struggle to make ends meet.

Experts often use 'housing stress' as an indicator of housing affordability levels. Households are considered to be in 'housing stress' when 30% or more of their combined household income is spent on direct housing costs – mortgage or rent payments.

Therefore, situations in which local residents may face affordability problems include, but are not limited to, the following:

- The inability of retirees to down-size to a smaller and more affordable home in the same community because smaller housing is unavailable
- The inability for a household to pay rent on a family home where a person has lost a spouse/partner, or where a spouse/partner becomes unemployed
- Where a lower paid worker gains employment in a local area but cannot afford to live there
- The inability for potential home owners (especially first home owners) to access the housing markets because house prices, down payments or mortgage repayments are too high



- Where adult children seeking independent living are unable to find housing in the appropriate location and size
- The inability to find adequate social housing as a result of inadequate supply, discrimination, or lack of services in a local area.

## 2.2 What is adaptable housing?

Adaptable housing is defined as housing that is designed and built to meet the changing needs of occupants across their lifetime. Adaptable housing units are designed so they can be, or can be easily modified in the future to become, accessible to both occupants and visitors with disabilities or progressive disabilities. Adaptable housing design includes easy living features that aim to make homes easier and safer to use for all occupants including: people with a disability, the elderly, people with temporary injuries and families with young children.

The current benchmark for adaptable housing is the Australian Standard (AS 4299) for Adaptable Housing, published in 1995.

Research and international practice in regard to adaptable housing shows that the concept of adaptable housing is being broadened to include a number of related concepts such as 'flexible housing', 'universal housing' and 'connected neighbourhoods'. This means that planning for new neighbourhoods, as well as the construction of individual dwellings, is done so that people in all stages of life can live in, and access, the house and neighbourhood facilities.

Many industry guidelines that are recognised as best practice adopt this broader concept of adaptable housing. Examples include Landcom's Housing Diversity Guide (June 2011), Landcom's Universal Housing Design Guide (date), the Master Builders Association's Housing for Life guidelines, and Livable Housing Australia's Livable Housing Design guidelines.

In recognition of this important concept, many local Councils have, or are planning to, incorporate the principles of adaptable housing based on the requirements of AS4299 and other industry guidelines in the next revision of their comprehensive LEPs or DCPs.

## 2.3 Why is affordable and adaptable housing important?

Maitland City Council has an active interest in the housing outcomes for the community in its local government area (LGA). Having a place to live – which is affordable, safe and appropriate – is a basic and fundamental human right that is central to a person's sense of belonging and integrity, and as an important member of the community.

Healthy communities are characterised by a diversity of people and places. Providing a range of housing types for people at all life stages and on different incomes contributes to creating communities that are vibrant and diverse. It also means that key workers – people who earn lower incomes but provide essential services to the community (such as nurses, teachers and community care workers) – have affordable places to live and can continue to provide services to the whole community.

The design quality of suburbs and neighbourhoods can also impact on a person's quality of life. Affordable housing does not mean inferior housing; this is where adaptable housing is an important and related goal. Adaptable housing is about creating high quality dwellings that are accessible, pleasant and welcoming places to live. Adaptable housing allows people with reduced mobility and the elderly to comfortably enter and live in a greater number of dwellings. It also means housing stock is safer for all occupants, more energy and water efficient and produces less waste.

Adaptable housing is becoming an increasingly important issue as Australia's population continues to age. With the aging population comes increased pressure on the provision of social and

economic infrastructure, the urban environment, transport and housing. Planning for well-connected neighbourhoods and flexible building design means people's homes and neighbourhoods will continue to be accessible as they age. Making more homes adaptable can allow people to move within their neighbourhood when down-sizing, rather than looking elsewhere for appropriately priced 'accessible' homes. Enabling people to 'age in place' has a number of benefits including:

- Reduced public spending on aged care
- Social connectedness
- Financial support to older people.

Generally a limited availability of affordable and adaptable housing has economic, social, spatial and environmental consequences. Some of these consequences include:

- Spatial polarisation between the rich and poor, with visible differences between areas
- Less disposable income and over-crowding, affecting individual and family quality of life and leading to stress, poor health and family breakdown
- Movement of young people and the working-age population out of the community, threatening the age mix and the employment base of the wider population
- The inability to attract labour to the area, threatening labour market efficiency
- More personal borrowing, which means the economy becomes more sensitive to interest rate rises
- Exclusion from community events and services, and poor access to education, employment and recreational activities, if affordable housing is not well-located
- Diminished social interaction with segments of the market dominated by high income, but temporary ('fly in-fly out') workers related to the mining sector
- Lack of people in essential services as 'key workers' are priced out of an area
- Exclusion from financial benefits created through property ownership.

The impact of affordability problems can be more acute in regional settings, such as Maitland because the housing market is impacted by two factors simultaneously:

1. Population and economic factors also experienced in city and metropolitan areas also impact regional settings, such as population growth, an ageing population, imbalance of supply and demand and the impact of housing finance availability and government policies
2. Unique factors peculiar to the region can cause additional strain on the housing market, such as local geographic factors that limit housing development (e.g. flooding) or specific economic pressures (e.g. resource boom).

Affordable and adaptable housing is particularly important to Maitland City Council, who was successful in being a recipient of \$11.3 Million in Federal Government funding under the Building Better Regional Cities (BBRC) program in 2011. The BBRC program aims to improve housing delivery. Therefore, the funding to reconstruct Athel D'Ombra Drive must be linked to affordable housing outcomes. It is thus important that Council use this opportunity to stimulate housing development, including affordable housing, in Central Maitland in a coordinated and planned way.

### 3 DEMOGRAPHIC AND HOUSING SNAPSHOT

A preliminary analysis of Maitland's local housing market has been undertaken to inform the AAHAP. Generally, a local housing market is influenced by:

- The size, age, gender and ethnic structure of the population (demographics) and type of households and household structures, as indicators of housing need and demand
- House prices, rents, housing stress and vacancy rates as indicators of affordability levels and the state of the local housing market.

Data for this demographic and housing analysis has been drawn from the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) 2011 Census, NSW government population projections, Housing NSW's Housing Market Database, Rental Bond Board data and Council's Community Profile.

#### 3.1 People

The population of Maitland LGA was 67,478 on 30 June 2011 based on Census 2011 data. However, the official ABS estimated resident population, which is more accurate and updated annually, was 69,646 people in Maitland in 2011.

In 2006 there were 64,670 people living in Maitland; this represents a growth of 4,976 people over the 5 years between 2006 and 2011 or 1.43% per year. In comparison NSW grew by only 0.9% per year over the same period.

The average household size in Maitland has remained at 2.7 people per household between 2006 and 2011. The number of dwellings in Maitland has grown by 2,555 from 23,937 dwellings in 2006 to 26,492 in 2011.

Growing population, currently at **69,646** people

**2.7** people per household

#### 3.2 Age structure

Maitland has a *lower* median age (36) than the average across the Lower Hunter (37) or NSW (38).

When compared to the NSW average, Maitland in 2011 had a *higher* proportion of people in the younger age groups (under 15) and a *lower* proportion of people in the older age groups (60+). Compared to the NSW average, Maitland had a *higher* percentage of 'Primary schoolers' (10.1% compared to 8.8%), 'Secondary schoolers' (8.8% compared to 7.7%) and 'Babies and pre-schoolers' (7.5% compared to 6.6%).

Median age is **36**

**60-69** is the fastest growing age group

The older generations (60+) represent a *smaller* proportion of the Maitland population (18.1%) when compared to NSW (20.3%). However, the older generation is growing *faster* than any other age group in Maitland. The three *largest* changes in age structure in the years 2006-2011 were in the following older age groups:

- Empty nesters and retirees (60 to 69) (+1,519 persons)
- Parents and homebuilders (35 to 49) (+891 persons)
- Older workers and pre-retirees (50 to 59) (+772 persons).

### 3.3 Dwellings

In 2011 there were 26,445 private dwellings and 47 non-private dwellings in Maitland.

Of the private dwellings in Maitland, 23,056 (87.2%) were separate houses, 3,172 (12%) were medium density dwellings, and 214 were other types of homes including caravans, cabins, houseboats or not stated. In comparison, only 70% of dwellings in NSW were separate houses, while 17.4% were medium density and 13.3% were high density dwellings.

Separate houses with 3 bedrooms are most common type of home in Maitland

Dwellings with 3 bedrooms are the most common in Maitland LGA. The number of bedrooms in a dwelling is an indicator of the size of dwellings, and together with the dwelling type provides insight into the role Maitland plays in the housing market. For example, an area of high density dwellings that have mainly 1-2 bedrooms is likely to attract students, single workers and young couples, whereas a high density area with dwellings that are predominantly 2-3 bedroom may attract more empty nesters and families.

Analysis of the number of bedrooms in Maitland's dwellings in 2011 shows that there was a *lower* proportion of dwellings with 1-2 bedrooms, and a *higher* proportion of dwellings with 3 or more bedrooms, when compared with NSW.

Overall, 3,736 (15%) dwellings had 1-2 bedrooms, 10,726 (43.2%) had 3 bedrooms and 9,416 (38%) had 4 or more bedrooms, compared with 28%, 38% and 28% for NSW respectively.

### 3.4 Tenure

Analysis of the housing tenure in Maitland in 2011 shows that there was a *smaller* proportion of households who owned their homes outright, a *smaller* proportion who were renters, and a *larger* proportion purchasing their dwelling when compared to NSW.

Most households have a mortgage and pay between \$2,000 – \$2,199 per month

Overall, 38.7% of households had a mortgage and 30% owned their homes outright, compared to 31.9% and 31.9% respectively in NSW.

26.3% of the households rented, compared to 29.1% in NSW.

With the most dominant group in Maitland being households with a mortgage, a brief analysis of the average mortgage repayments was undertaken. Maitland had a *smaller* proportion of households paying low mortgage repayments (less than \$1,000 per month) and a *similar* proportion of households with high mortgage repayments (more than \$2,600 per month), when compared with NSW.

In comparison to NSW, Maitland had a *larger* proportion of households with mortgage repayments in the higher price brackets of:

- \$1600-\$1799 (10.7% compared to 7.4% in NSW)
- \$1800-\$1999 (8.2% compared to 5.8% in NSW)
- \$1400-\$1599 (8.5% compared to 6.2% in NSW)
- \$2000-\$2199 (12% compared to 9.9% in NSW).

Of the 6,528 households who rented in Maitland, 76% (4,953) rented from a real estate or privately, 23% (1,486) rented a form of social housing and 1% (89) did not state.

### 3.5 Household formation

Analysis of the household / family types in Maitland in 2011 shows that there was a *higher* proportion of couple families with children (35%) as well as a *higher* proportion of one-parent families (12.4%) and couples without children (26.0%), when compared with 31.7%, 11% and 24.5% respectively for NSW.

**Couples with children** make up most households – most of these have **young children**

However, there was a *lower* proportion of lone person households (20.9%) when compared to NSW (23.1%).

Between 2006-2011, with an additional 2,322 new households, in Maitland the *largest* increases were in the following groups: couples without children (+744 households) followed by lone person households (+676 households).

#### Households without children

The majority of households without children were middle-aged couples (2,650), older couples (2,242) or older lone persons (2,056).

About half of all households have no children – most of these are middle aged/older **couples**

Analysis of the 12,221 households without children in Maitland in 2011 shows a *smaller* proportion of young (aged 15-44) lone person households, a *smaller* proportion of middle-aged (aged 45-64) lone person households, and a *smaller* proportion of older (aged 65+) lone person households, when compared to NSW.

The analysis also shows that there was a *larger* proportion of middle-aged couples without children (10.7%), when compared to NSW (8.6%), and this is the fastest growing group in Maitland over the five years since 2006.

#### Households with children

Of the 11,654 households with children in Maitland in 2011, couples with young children (children aged under 15 only) made up the largest group (18.8%). This group represents a *higher* proportion of all households with children (18.8%) when compared to NSW (16.8%).

**Young** lone person households are under-represented in Maitland

Maitland also had a *higher* proportion of single parent households with young children (5.3%) than the NSW average (4.2%). Single-parents households made up about one quarter of households with children in Maitland in 2011.

Between 2006 and 2011, households with older children (children aged 15 and over only), in both couple and single-parent households, were the *fastest* growing types of households in Maitland.

### 3.6 Employment and income

The size of Maitland's labour force in 2011 was 32,830 persons of which 31,188 (95%) were employed and 1,642 (5%) were unemployed. 10,832 (35%) were employed part-time and 19,743 (63%) were full time workers.

Between 2006 and 2011, the number of people employed in Maitland grew by 3,924 persons while the number unemployed persons showed a decrease of 267 persons.

#### Industry sectors

The three *largest* industry sectors in Maitland in 2011 were:

- Manufacturing (3,643 people or 11.7%, compared to 8.4% in NSW)
- Health care and social assistance (3,617 people or 11.6%, a similar proportion to NSW)
- Retail trade (3,574 people or 11.5%, compared to 10.3% in NSW).



**Manufacturing** is the largest industry sector in Maitland


Between 2006 and 2011, the *largest* job increases were in the following sectors:

- Mining (+820 persons)
- Health care and social assistance (+735 persons)
- Construction (+463 persons).

In comparison to NSW, Maitland had a *larger* percentage of persons employed in mining (6.4% compared to 1% in NSW), and a *larger* percentage in manufacturing (11.7% compared to 8.4% in NSW).

#### Occupations

Reflecting the abovementioned industry sectors, the three most popular occupations in Maitland in 2011 were technicians and trades workers (5,639 people or 18.1%), followed by professionals (16.6%), clerical and administrative workers (14.1%), labourers (10.4%), and machinery operators and drivers (10.4%).



Technicians and trade workers, machine operators, labourers are the most popular occupations

A significantly *smaller* percentage of workers were employed in professional services, scientific and technical services; information media and telecommunications; and financial services.

In comparison to NSW, Maitland had:

- A *larger* percentage employed as technicians and trades workers (18.1% compared to 13.2%)
- A *larger* percentage employed as machinery operators and drivers (10.4% compared to 6.4%)
- A *larger* percentage employed as labourers (10.4% compared to 8.7%)
- A *smaller* percentage employed as professionals (16.6% compared to 22.7%).

#### Income

In 2011 the median weekly household income in Maitland was \$1,292, which is *higher* than that in Newcastle LGA (\$1,165), the Lower Hunter (\$1,182) and across NSW (\$1,237).

The table below shows that Maitland in 2011 had relatively *high* median income levels when compared with Newcastle, the Lower Hunter and NSW. Whereas in 2001 Maitland was below the NSW median income level, by 2011 Maitland overtook NSW with an addition \$55 per week.

Median weekly income	2001	2006	2011
Maitland LGA	\$700-\$799	\$1,025	\$1,292
Newcastle LGA	\$600-\$699	\$885	\$1,165
NSW	\$800-\$999	\$1,036	\$1,237

Analysis of household income levels shows that Maitland had a *large* proportion of households in the medium to high-income bracket. In 2011 there was *lower* proportion of low-income households (those earning less than \$600 per week) but also *lower* proportion of high-income households (those earning \$2,500 per week or more), when compared to NSW.

Overall 18.4% of the households in Maitland earned a high income and 20.4% were low income households, compared to 18.9% and 21.7% respectively for NSW.

The major differences between household incomes in Maitland and NSW were:

- A *larger* percentage of Maitland households earned \$1500-\$1999 (12.2% compared to 10.8% in NSW)
- A *larger* percentage of Maitland households earned \$2000-\$2499 (8.8% compared to 7.7% in NSW).

**\$1,292 median income;** higher than NSW, the Lower Hunter and Newcastle LGA

### 3.7 Building approvals

Building approval data is used as a leading indicator of the general level of residential development, economic activity, employment and investment in an area.

Residential building activity depends on many factors that vary with the state of the economy including interest rates, availability of mortgage funds, government spending, and business investment. Large financial changes or shocks, such as the Global Financial Crisis of 2008/09 can be observed in the data. However, the number of building approvals can fluctuate substantially from year to year simply as a result of the short-term nature of many construction projects, and the cyclical nature of the industry.

There were 706 residential buildings approved in Maitland in the 2011-12 financial year. This is significantly *higher* than building approvals in Newcastle (421) and Cessnock (336) over the same period.

Maitland has experienced *high* levels of building approvals since 2009-10, with annual approval numbers ranging between 677-750 during this period. In comparison, Newcastle has had less than 500 building approvals in the last two years.

### 3.8 Housing costs

#### Rental

The current median weekly rent in Maitland is \$259 according to the Housing NSW Rent and Sales Report (June 2012). As shown in the table below, weekly rents for both separate houses and flats/units are *lower* in Maitland when compared to Newcastle LGA and Greater Sydney.

Median Weekly Rent	Separate houses		Flat/unit	
	<i>2 bed</i>	<i>3 bed</i>	<i>1 bed</i>	<i>2 bed</i>
Maitland LGA	\$300	\$340	\$170	\$270
Newcastle LGA	\$350	\$390	\$240	\$340
Sydney SD	\$375	\$420	\$430	\$450
NSW	\$300	\$350	\$390	\$400

## Purchase

The current median purchase price for single houses and other non-strata dwellings is \$365,000 and for strata dwellings is \$268,000 in Maitland according to the Housing NSW Rent and Sales Report (June 2012). As shown in the table below, dwellings in Maitland are *less* expensive than in Newcastle, the Greater Sydney Area and on average in NSW.

Median Purchase Price	Strata	Non-strata
Maitland LGA	\$268,000	\$365,000
Newcastle LGA	\$340,000	\$396,000
Sydney SD	\$477,000	\$580,000
NSW	\$435,000	\$433,000

Consultation with local real estate agents, however, suggests that the actual rental and purchase prices are significantly higher than suggested in the Housing NSW Rent and Sales Report. Based on the 50 most recent properties purchased or rented in Maitland from a Central Maitland Real Estate agency:

- \$349 is the current average weekly rent (for all rental properties)
- \$210 was the median weekly rent for a 1 bedroom unit
- \$202,000 – \$210,000 was the selling price for older style 2 bedroom homes
- \$250,000 – \$267,000 was the selling price was a 2 bedroom unit
- \$300,000 was the selling price for an average 3 bedroom home.

### 3.9 Housing stress

Housing stress occurs when a households weekly or monthly spending on housing costs (rent or mortgage payment) is more than 30% of its total household income.

About the same proportion of renters as purchasers were in housing stress in Maitland in 2011. In 2011, there were higher proportions of **purchasers** in housing stress in Maitland when compared to Newcastle or the Lower Hunter. In 2011, 8.6% of households in Maitland had mortgage repayments of over 30% of their total household income and therefore considered to be in housing stress. This compares to 7.4% in Newcastle and 8.3% in the Lower Hunter, but is lower than the NSW average which is 10.5%.

In 2011, housing stress levels for **renters** in Maitland were *lower* than for those in Newcastle, Greater Sydney and across NSW. In 2011, 8.7% of households in Maitland spent 30% or more of their household income on rent, and thus were considered to be in housing stress. This compares to 12% in Newcastle and 11.6% on average in NSW.

Area	% households where mortgage repayments are 30% or more of household income	% households where rent payments are 30% or more of household income
Maitland LGA	8.6 %	8.7 %
Newcastle LGA	7.4 %	11.9 %
Lower Hunter	8.3 %	7.9 %
Greater Sydney	12.0 %	12.6 %
NSW	10.5 %	11.6 %

Housing NSW publishes information on rental and purchase housing markets in each LGA across the state. Information based on the 2011 Census is not available. However, using Centrelink data, Housing NSW calculates what proportion of people on low incomes in the private rental market and in receipt of Commonwealth Rent Assistance (CRA) were paying more than 30% of their income as an indicator of housing stress.



According to Housing NSW, in 2006 Maitland had over 3,000 private renters in receipt of CRA and 29% of these were in housing stress. Single person households made up the biggest proportion (60%) of those in housing stress, followed by single parents (28%).

Therefore, although residents of Maitland have experienced comparatively lower levels of housing stress when compared to NSW and nearby areas, this data indicates that the private rental market in Maitland is not catering adequately for the needs of lower income households and particularly small (single person) households. This impacts on older renters as well, with 15% in receipt of the Aged Pension (and a further 18% in receipt of the Disability Support Pension) in 2006, at a time when it is important for them to remain close to social and support networks, as well as a range of services.

Overall, based on the 2011 Census data approximately 17% of households in Maitland were in housing stress. This represents a significant portion of the population in Maitland who need assistance to live in a sustainable way.

### 3.10 Availability of 'affordable' housing

Despite the relatively low price of housing in Maitland for both renters and buyers, and the relatively low levels of housing stress, the level of 'affordability' is also influenced by the availability of homes for rent and purchase.

The main trend over the last two years has been a significant and rapid reduction in the proportion of dwellings in Maitland that would be 'affordable' to rent or purchase by households on very low, low and moderate incomes. The tables below show the proportion of current housing in Maitland that would be considered 'affordable' to rent and purchase by households in the very low, low and moderate income brackets between the years 2010-2012. The analysis shows:

#### For **renters**:

- The proportion of total current housing stock that would be 'affordable' has *reduced* since 2010, and this reduction has been much more acute in the rental market in comparison to the homeownership market
- For moderate-income households, a *higher* proportion of the rental housing stock in Maitland would be 'affordable' (80-90%), in comparison to Newcastle (71-79%) and Greater Sydney (51-57%), and this has been consistent since 2010
- For low-income households, the proportion of rental stock that would be 'affordable' *reduced* from **55%** in June 2010 to **37%** in March 2012. This 18% reduction over a two year period is significant when considering that Newcastle and Greater Sydney experienced reductions of only 5% over the same period.
- Very low income households in Maitland also experienced strong *reductions* in the proportion of 'affordable' rental housing stock available to them, dropping from 19% in June 2010 to 13% in March 2012.

This means there are far less 'affordable' rental properties available than two years ago. More lower-income earners are therefore vying for a smaller proportion of lower-priced housing and many may be forced into the higher end of the market, meaning they may incur housing costs that are unsustainable.

#### For **buyers**:

- For moderate-income households, Maitland has a *high* proportion of 'affordable' properties for purchase (39-59%) compared to in Newcastle (26-39%) and Greater Sydney (11-17%)
- Only 4% of houses are 'affordable' to purchase for low-income households in Maitland
- 0% of houses are 'affordable' to purchase for very low-income households.

### % of rental housing stock that is 'affordable' for households on:

	Very low incomes					Low incomes					Moderate incomes				
	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
Maitland LGA	19	15	14	12	13	55	43	43	36	37	90	88	85	80	86
Newcastle LGA	19	18	19	18	22	45	39	38	37	40	79	79	71	77	76
Sydney SD	5	5	4	4	3	19	16	16	14	14	57	54	54	53	51

### % of purchase housing stock that is 'affordable' for households on:

	Very low incomes					Low incomes					Moderate incomes				
	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12	Jun 10	Dec 10	Jun 11	Dec 11	Mar 12
Maitland LGA	0	0	0	0	0	7	4	3	7	4	50	39	40	59	53
Newcastle LGA	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	2	1	37	26	29	39	38
Sydney SD	0	0	0	0	0	2	1	1	2	1	16	11	12	17	17

A key area of need is therefore those people who cannot afford to access the home ownership market, and who are therefore forced to enter an already stretched rental housing market. As more people are forced to rent, the overall availability of rental properties reduces which leads to rental price rises and a reduction in the overall proportion of 'affordably' priced rental properties. Low and very low-income earners are therefore the hardest hit group.

### 3.11 Affordable price points

The NSW Centre for Affordable Housing has mapped the percentage of rental housing and housing for purchase that is affordable to households with incomes in the lowest 40% of all households in Maitland. It shows that Maitland is in the 'Moderate High' category of housing need.

An indication as to the rent and house prices that would be 'affordable' for lower income households has been calculated for the Maitland area based on the 2011 Census data (income levels) and is provided in the tables below. For example, a household on a low income could afford to spend up to \$310 per week on rent. Very low income households are only able to afford to spend \$194 on weekly rent, while moderate income households can spend up to \$465 on rent. Any higher and the household would be spending more than 30% of its income directly on housing costs and therefore would fall into 'housing stress'.

Similarly, a moderate-income household could afford to buy a \$337,800 home before falling into housing stress. Low income households could only afford a home for \$224,000 and very low income households only \$141,100.

As the current median price for a detached single dwelling in Maitland is \$365,000, it is clear that households on very low, low and even moderate-incomes could not afford to buy an **average** home in Maitland without falling into housing stress. These households may be forced to buy a poorer quality home, a smaller home or one that is not as well-located. Similarly, the median weekly rent for a detached single dwelling in Maitland is between \$300 and \$340 depending on the number of bedrooms. Households on very low incomes, who could only spend \$194 or less on rent to remain out of housing stress, would find it difficult to find a suitably priced house in Maitland given this relatively high rental price. The majority of low income earners could fall into housing stress as an 'affordable' rental home would need to be priced between \$194 to \$310 per week.

Target group	Definition of target group	Affordable weekly rent*	Max loan amount	Max purchase price**
Very low	<50% MHI	<\$194	\$127,000	\$141,100
Low	50-80% MHI	\$194 - \$310	\$202,000	\$224,400
Moderate	>80% and <120% MHI	\$310 - \$465	\$304,000	\$337,800

Notes: MHI = Median household income ; \* 30% of weekly income ; \*\* Based on 10% deposit over 30 years

### 3.12 Summary of affordability in Maitland

Levels of affordability are determined by a range of factors such as income levels, housing costs, the availability of homes for rent and purchase.

Relatively high incomes and comparatively low housing costs (especially for those on higher incomes) have, historically, lead to what appears to be low levels of housing stress for both renters and purchasers in Maitland.

However, there is a growing mismatch between the type and size of existing housing and new housing being produced (supply) and the population (demand), which impacts on affordability levels.

A summary of the current affordability issues facing Maitland is provided below:

- Rents are rising strongly, demand is increasing and the proportion of affordable dwellings is reducing. Despite some indicators suggesting there are theoretically low levels of housing stress and plenty of people who can afford their housing costs, there is a growing proportion of low and moderate income earners in housing stress and a reduction in the amount of proportion of homes that they can comfortably afford.
- Despite the relatively high residential land supply and rates of building approvals, the availability of affordable housing is falling rapidly. This suggests new homes being delivered into the market are either not at the right price point or not appropriate in terms of size, location and type, to meet current (and future) demand.
- This lack of housing diversity has led to, and is strongly linked to, declining affordability in Maitland, with the vast majority of dwellings being single detached houses with three bedrooms. Simply put, currently there are not enough smaller homes at the lower priced end of the market.
- The fact that the vast majority of CRA recipients in housing stress in Maitland are single person households suggests the need for more smaller, one bedroom stock. New boarding house style accommodation could assist in meeting some local need. Boarding houses can also help to meet the need of a transient working population such as that experienced in the mining sector.
- The fact that a significant proportion of CRA recipients in housing stress in Maitland are also on the Aged Pension and the Disability Support Pension suggests there are insufficient affordable housing opportunities for older lower income earners. This is a serious problem given that that this is the fastest growing age group in Maitland.
- Declining levels of affordable housing as a proportion of all housing stock, coupled with a rapidly growing population, means many vulnerable households will increasingly be forced into more expensive housing and thus may fall deeper into housing stress.
- The current price points for an 'affordable' house for purchase range from \$141,100 to \$337,800.
- The current price points for an 'affordable' rental property range from \$194 to \$465 per week.

Research into affordability trends, coupled with an analysis of population and housing data and consultation with key stakeholders in Maitland, assisted in identifying target groups which are considered vulnerable, or in need of assistance, in relation to housing.

These groups and their identified affordable or adaptable housing issues are summarised below:

## Target Groups in Maitland:

### Low-income households

Low-income households, including single parent families, require dwellings with good transport options, close to employment, and service provision such as health, community, retail, and education. The income of these households may prohibit access to the social system, but is too low to access the private rental system, and a position of housing stress occurs as a result. Single parent families also form a part of this target group.

There is a need for more one bedroom, studio and boarding house style accommodation to assist in meeting the needs of the community through different stages of the housing life cycle and particularly for young people and elderly people on lower incomes.

### Young single persons

Young single persons require small dwellings, with access to education, training and employment opportunities. Young people under 18 years of age are not able to hold a lease, and as such the private rental can be difficult without a parent or guardian. Secondary dwellings may be a good alternative for single persons looking to be more independent.

### Temporary / mining workers

The availability of rental properties in the area is impacted by fluctuations in the mining sector and in particular the influx of mining workers at times of high employment levels. There are also acute impacts when job losses occur in the mining industry, which can be sudden and reduce the incomes of a large portion of the population. Uptake of rental properties by mining workers can significantly reduce the number of homes available for singles or families, in particular those who are unable to access the homeownership market and thus rely on rental. More secondary dwellings or boarding housing is required to meet the housing needs of mining workers Maitland.

### Key workers

Key workers often represent the lower paid, but essential, people in the community such as nurses, teachers and community and care workers. With the pressure of rapid population growth, increases in the number of high paid workers in certain sectors (e.g. mining sector) and major fluctuations caused by employment cycles at the mines, key workers can fall into housing stress due to a lack of lower-priced housing options. More diverse types of housing including 1-2 bedroom dwellings, as well as smaller housing types (e.g. medium density dwellings such as townhouses, and small-lot housing) particularly targeted to lower income earners is required to meet the housing needs of the working Maitland population. Ensuring a mix of housing types within new development will also encourage the working population to stay in the area rather than relocate away to more affordable locations.

### Aged and disabled housing

During workshops stakeholders highlighted a trend whereby retirees (couples and single) want to down size but are unable to move out of their existing larger house because there are either no alternative housing options available in Maitland or the sale price for their existing home is not sufficiently competitive to purchase a smaller house. Due to the dominance of larger detached dwellings, the demand for smaller homes is high which, in turn, drives up prices.

Housing for older people and people with a disability needs to be well located in relation to services, facilities and transport as well as accessible for those with mobility problems. More purpose built aged housing combined with greater housing diversity, including accessory dwellings or granny flats, particularly targeted to lower income earners, is required to meet the housing needs of older lower income Maitland residents. Ensuring a proportion of all new housing is adaptable will assist in enabling residents to age in place.

## 4 FUTURE GROWTH

The AAHAP needs to consider not only the current population characteristics but also the likely future population. Understanding the future population helps create a clearer direction for the likely target groups for the AAHAP.

### 4.1 Future population and dwelling forecast

#### Strategic framework

The Lower Hunter Regional Strategy 2006-2031 (LHRS), released by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure in 2006, identifies Maitland as a major regional centre, with town centres at East Maitland, Lochinvar (emerging), Rutherford and Thornton.

The LHRS is based on a forecast population of an additional 160,000 residents across the Lower Hunter by the year 2031, requiring 115,000 additional dwellings and 66,000 jobs within the region.

An additional 26,500 dwellings in Maitland is the target between 2006 and 2031. Centres, urban infill development and identified urban release (greenfield) areas have been nominated as key focus areas to accommodate the additional dwellings necessary to support the forecast population. 1,300 of these new dwellings are expected to be located in Central Maitland, with the majority located in urban extension sites and greenfield release areas.

The table below identifies the urban land supply targets according to the LHRS:

New urban release areas	21,500
Urban infill development	3,000
Urban consolidation (centres development)	2,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>26,500 dwellings</b>

#### Projected population growth

Population projections for every LGA in NSW are provided by the state government. The projections are regularly updated based on new data. The most recent forecasts (August 2012) predict Maitland's population in 2031 will reach 111,222. This figure is based on an estimated 2006 population of 64,670 and 75,093 in 2011.

However, Maitland has not grown at the rates previously predicted. Maitland reached an estimated resident population of 69,646 people in 2011 as opposed to the predicted 75,093 people (ABS, 2011). According to ABS data the population grew by approximately 5,000 people between 2006 and 2011 at a growth rate of 1.43% per year.

With a current population base of 69,646 and assuming a 2% per annum increase, the projected population for Maitland in the year 2031 could more realistically be forecast to reach 98,302. To achieve higher population growth as predicted in the LHRS and in the population projections provided by the state government, a higher growth rate of 4% per annum would be required (MMC, 2013).

## 4.2 Future residential land and dwelling supply

Maitland City Council, in partnership with other levels of government and the community, is responsible to plan for and accommodate the city's future growth.

The Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy 2001-2020 (MUSS) was developed to provide the overarching framework for urban growth in the city, with the aim of achieving an appropriate balance between economic, social and environmental outcomes. The primary focus of the MUSS is investigation, sequencing and management of land release for residential and employment land uses.

Maitland City Council is currently undertaking a review of the MUSS (2010 Edition) and considering longer term growth options beyond 2031. The revised MUSS will take into account the revised LHRS, 2011 Census data and the updated local policies of Council. Initial outcomes of the review suggest Maitland has the capacity to accommodate higher dwelling supply than the LHRS dwelling target.

### Greenfield and urban release areas

Land supply for **23,645 dwellings** has been identified in the MUSS which would provide for up to 22 years of residential land supply. The following is a summary of Council's current plan to accommodate the next 20 years of growth (as included in the draft growth options paper) across greenfield and urban release areas:

- There is capacity for 15,420 dwellings within existing but undeveloped residential zoned lands in the Maitland comprising:
  - 14,966 lots on the 1,575ha currently zoned R1 General Residential
  - 454 lots on the 156ha currently zoned R5 Large Lot Residential
- Recent development in the new release areas of Chisholm, Gillieston Heights and Aberglasslyn suggests residential densities in the order of 9.5 lots/ha on R1 zoned land and 2.2 lots/ha on R5 zoned land should be used as the benchmark for this new dwelling growth
- To maintain the current rate of building activity (approximately 700 dwellings per year), approximately 663 dwellings per year on R1 zoned land and 41 dwellings per year on R5 zoned land need to be delivered
- If the current rate of building activity is maintained, Maitland has an estimated 22 year supply of residential land within existing undeveloped residential zoned lands
- There is also capacity for an addition 8,225 dwellings on land identified for future urban release but which is not yet zoned residential (known as Category 1 or 2).

The timeframe and location for future residential development and ongoing residential land supply is as follows:

Timeframe	Area	Lots	Approximate Number of Lots
<b>Short-Term</b> (0-5 years)	Anambah	32	4,554
	Aberglasslyn	550	
	Ashtonfield	31	
	Bolwarra/Bolwarra Heights	350	
	Chisholm/Thornton North	595	
	Farley	-	
	Gillieston heights	729	
	Mt Harris	134	
	Largs	314	
	Lochinvar	1000	

Timeframe	Area	Lots	Approximate Number of Lots
	Louth Park	100	
	Morpeth/Raworth	250	
	Maitland Vale	-	
	Rutherford	400	
	Windella	69	
<b>Medium-Term</b> (5-10 years)	Anambah	533	5,707
	Aberglasslyn	550	
	Ashtonfield	-	
	Bolwarra/Bolwarra Heights	369	
	Chisholm/Thornton North	1000	
	Farley	500	
	Gillieston heights	728	
	Mt Harris	-	
	Largs	-	
	Lochinvar	1000	
	Louth Park	377	
	Morpeth/Raworth	250	
	Maitland Vale	-	
	Rutherford	400	
	Windella	-	
<b>Long-Term</b> (10+ years)	Anambah	1000	8,580
	Aberglasslyn	498	
	Ashtonfield	-	
	Bolwarra/Bolwarra Heights	-	
	Chisholm/Thornton North	3574	
	Farley	1100	
	Gillieston heights	308	
	Mt Harris	-	
	Largs	-	
	Lochinvar	2000	
	Louth Park	-	
	Morpeth/Raworth	67	
	Maitland Vale	-	
	Rutherford	33	
	Windella	-	
<b>Total (0-20 years)</b>			<b>18,841</b>

Notes:

Lots per year	942.05
Population increase	50,870.7
Population increase per year	2,543.535
Average % increase	3.65%

## **Infill development**

In addition to growth in the greenfield/urban release areas, the MUSS plans for approximately 15% of all new dwellings in Maitland to be infill development.

The 15% of dwellings are to be delivered as infill and centres-based development, of which 1,300 can be accommodated in Central Maitland through the Central Maitland Structure Plan.

Specifically, infill development in Central Maitland is encouraged as it can be linked to associated improvements such as the CBD mall redevelopment, the High Street Master Plan, BBRC funding for Athel D’Ombrain Drive, upgrading of the transport hub at Maitland station and improvements to the inner-city street network.

Recently approved and now under construction mixed use development in High Street in Maitland’s CBD has recently been put to the market with strong interest, according to the developer Grand Designs Property (Maitland Mercury, Maitland NSW, 5 March 2013). This is the first of a number of projects which are in progress in the CBD, including a 36 apartment development at the corner of Steam and Elgin Streets in Central Maitland. These types of developments will start to fill the gap in the supply of more medium-high density development, and smaller house sizes in the CBD, which are suitable for retirees and young couples.



## 5 PLANNING FRAMEWORKS

The AAHAP is guided by existing government policies that set the overarching frameworks and objectives for housing delivery. This section summarises the main strategic and statutory policies that will need to be considered in implementing the Action Plan.

### 5.1 Strategic planning policy

#### **Our Cities, Our Future — National Urban Policy**

Our Cities, Our Future sets the Australian Government's objectives and directions for Australia's cities. One of the four goals of the National Urban Policy is to enhance the 'liveability' of our cities by promoting better urban design, planning and affordable access to recreational, cultural and community facilities.

The objectives and priorities relating to affordability and adaptability include facilitating the supply of appropriate mixed income housing by encouraging a range of housing and supporting the development of aged persons accommodation. Affordable living choices should be supported by locating housing close to facilities and services, including jobs and public transport, and diverse education opportunities.

#### **NSW 2021**

NSW 2021 is a 10 year plan prepared by the NSW Government which encourages an urban form consistent with the principles of new urbanism. Goal 5 of the plan is to 'place downward pressure on the cost of living' by providing support to people in need and dealing with the underlying causes of rising household costs. This goal aims to increase the supply of land for housing and provide incentives to help make housing in NSW more affordable and housing stock more appropriate for people's needs.

#### **NSW Long Term Transport Master Plan**

Released by Transport for NSW 2012, this Plan sets the NSW Government's direction for transport planning for the next 20 years, providing a framework for transport policy and investment decisions that respond to key challenges. One of the key initiatives of the Master Plan that will impact Maitland is the delivery of the Hunter Expressway. The Hunter Expressway will provide a new east-west connection between Newcastle and the growing Lower Hunter to provide greater reliability, access and connectivity for the growing population, for both freight and passenger travel.

#### **Lower Hunter Regional Strategy**

Released by the NSW Department of Planning and Infrastructure in 2006, this is the strategic land use planning framework to guide the sustainable growth of the Lower Hunter over the next 25 years. The Strategy aims to provide 115,000 new dwellings by 2031 to accommodate both the changing housing demands of smaller households and reduced occupancy rates of the existing population, as well as meeting the housing demands for an additional 160,000 people.

Maitland is identified as a major regional centres. The main policy aim for housing is to facilitate and enable the release of 69,000 new greenfield lots in a coordinated way across the Lower Hunter, with improved neighbourhood design and more efficient use of infrastructure. Greater housing choice and ensuring infrastructure is well-planned with housing development are key aims.

## 5.2 Statutory planning legislation

### **Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979**

The Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979 (EP&A Act) provides the legislative framework for planning in NSW. The provision and maintenance of affordable housing is one of the main objectives of the EP&A Act. The NSW Government supports and provides guidance on planning policies that encourage the development of affordable housing whilst taking into account the impacts on local needs and character.

The EP&A Act defines affordable housing as “housing for very low income households, low income households or moderate income households, being such households as are prescribed by the regulations or as are provided for in an environmental planning instrument”. The Local Government Act in Section 5 and Section 8 requires local authorities to address affordable housing in the planning of their communities.

### **State Environmental Planning Policy (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008**

The NSW Housing Code is contained in the SEPP (Exempt and Complying Development Codes) 2008. The Code allow a landowner, amongst other things, to gain fast-tracked approval for standard one or two storey residential development on lots down to 200sqm (or major renovations) subject to meeting complying development criteria. The Housing Code also allows some forms of complying housing development on low hazard flood prone land.

### **State Environmental Planning Policy (Seniors Living) 2004**

This policy aims to ensure a sufficient supply of accommodation for older people and people with a disability by relaxing local residential development controls, subject to strict locational and design criteria, to ensure that such housing is of a high quality, well located, and consistent with the character and feel of local neighbourhoods.

### **State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009**

This policy provides a range of incentives that make it easier, quicker and cheaper to build affordable housing in NSW. When affordable housing development is proposed and complies with strict design and planning criteria within the SEPP, a consent authority cannot refuse the development application.

The incentives and criteria contained within the SEPP to increase the supply of affordable housing include FSR bonuses and relaxation of development requirements such as parking, landscaping, solar access and the like. Housing types covered by the SEPP include boarding houses, secondary dwellings, group homes and general residential flat buildings that have a component of affordable housing within, as well as of affordable housing developed by social housing providers, public authorities, joint ventures and Housing NSW.

The policy also includes provisions to restrict the reduction of affordable housing, by allowing the charge of mandatory contributions for any development that proposes to reduce the overall supply of affordable housing.

Other SEPPs relevant to affordable and adaptable housing are summarised in the Background Paper, including SEPP 9: Group Homes, SEPP 21: Caravan Parks, SEPP 36: Manufactured Home Estates, SEPP 65: Design Quality of Residential Flat Development and SEPP 70: Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes).

## 5.3 Local plans and policies

### **Maitland Urban Settlement Strategy (MUSS) 2001-2020** (2010 Edition)

As stated earlier, the MUSS provides the framework for the long term urban growth in the Maitland LGA. The primary focus of the MUSS is investigation, sequencing and management of land release for residential and employment land uses. The current adopted policy position to 'maintain a 10 to 15 year supply of zoned land' for both residential and employment lands. Refer to Section 4.2 of this report for further details of the residential land supply scenario.

General MUSS aims for land supply include:

- Maintain a 10 to 15 year supply of zoned residential land
- Provide a range of housing styles and lot sizes, guided by liveable urban design and efficient infrastructure provision
- Respond to household and population changes, including ageing population and smaller households, in identifying and planning for new urban development
- New development must be supported by necessary infrastructure, including utilities, transport, water cycle management, recreation, social and community services
- Avoiding areas subject to environmental constraints such as flooding.

MUSS aims for infill development include:

- Infill development should comprise 15% of all new dwellings in Maitland
- Consolidation and redevelopment of centres to be consistent with the identified investigation areas and the stated hierarchy of centres
- Development must respond to appropriate planning controls and specific design criteria which will be further investigated
- New development must be of a scale which ensures the character of centres and other infill areas is enhanced.

### **Maitland Local Environmental Plan (MLEP) 2011**

MLEP is the main planning instrument containing the overarching planning objectives and land use categorisation for all land across Maitland. One of these objectives of MLEP which is relevant to affordable and adaptable housing is: To provide a diversity of affordable housing with a range of housing choices throughout Maitland.

MLEP is a key factor influencing housing outcomes as it:

- Identifies land for residential development, its minimum allowable lot size (density), permitted uses
- The MLEP allows for lot sizes down to 450m<sup>2</sup> in the R1 zone with lots as small as 300m<sup>2</sup> permitted as integrated housing
- Residential development is also permitted in the B4 Mixed Use zone as part of a mixed use development
- Identified other matters than may constrain development potential such as heritage, biodiversity and flooding
- Identifies urban release areas where future urban release shall occur, together with the state and local infrastructure requirements for the land and the requirement to prepare development control plans before the areas are released.

## **Maitland Development Control Plan (MDCP) 2011**

MDCP contains detailed guidelines and planning controls for all development types within Maitland.

**Part B** – Environmental Guidelines – provides objectives and requirements for all development types in environmental sensitive locations. Floodplain management controls are of particular importance to development in Central Maitland and other flood affected areas. The DCP outlines the responsibilities of applicants proposing new development in flood affected areas, including the importance of attending pre-DA meetings, mapping requirements, and building design criteria.

**Part C** – Design Guidelines – control most development in the LGA. Setback and site coverage controls work in tandem to define building footprints, envelopes and the resultant floor space of buildings. Generally for residential dwellings the site coverage controls are 60% maximum site coverage / 40% minimum un-built area for single residential dwellings or dual occupancies (or 70/30 for residential flat buildings or multi-dwellings). Building heights are generally limited to 8m or for residential flat buildings 11m in residential zones and up to 14m in business zones.

Floor space incentives exist for development of heritage buildings. Council may exclude the floor space of a heritage item from any calculation of floor space ratio or car parking requirements relating to a development application that retains and conserves a heritage item. This encourages innovative design.

Also in Part C, the Accessibility and Adaptable Housing section provides objectives, design requirements and development controls for accessibility and adaptable housing. It applies to all new buildings and alteration of existing buildings. Most relevant to this Action Plan is the Adaptable Housing section. It encourages adaptable dwellings to be provided in locations that are close to public transport, community facilities and public services. Adaptable dwellings are to be located along the accessible path of travel, preferably close to the main entrance of a building. For development of 10 or more dwellings, at least one dwelling is required to be adaptable. All adaptable dwellings are required to meet the essential design criterion as listed in AS 4299.

**Part E** – Special Precincts – contains special controls for development in Central Maitland and the Central Maitland conservation area, as well as other key areas. Of particular interest to this Action Plan are the Flood Proofing Guidelines and Shop-Top Housing Controls for Central Maitland.

**Part F** – Urban Release Areas – contains objectives and design criteria for the development of Urban Release Areas identified within the MUSS. It provides details for subdivision design, building form, open space and the like. Part F also provides detailed design criteria for six Urban Release Areas identified within MLEP, including Aberglasslyn, Anambah, Gillieston Heights, Largs, Thornton North and Anambah Road. These specific objectives and criteria respond to the site specific opportunities and constraints of the site's and the level of potential housing supply.

## **Maitland Citywide Contributions Plan 2006 (2010)**

All new residential development intensifies the use of the existing resources and infrastructure. The Contributions Plan identifies the likely public services and amenities required to be provided as a result of the forecast increase in development and population across the LGA. This demand forms the basis for levying contributions on new development. This Plan includes contributions for recreation and open space, community and cultural services, road and traffic facilities and cycleways / shared paths.

The contributions identified within the Plan may be a result of public services and amenities being fully developer funded, where they are directly required as a result of development, or part developer and part Council funded where the existing population may also require the provision of certain additional public services and amenities.

Contributions are required for all types of residential development. However, the Plan provides for reduced rates for seniors living developments or housing for people with a disability approved

under the provisions of SEPP (Housing for Seniors or People with a Disability) 2004. Development of high level residential care facilities such as nursing homes will not be levied development contributions under this Plan, but will still be levied contributions under the Maitland City Council S94A Levy Contributions Plan.

### Central Maitland Structure Plan

The Central Maitland Structure Plan was developed in November 2009 and sets out an ambitious vision, supported by key strategies, to guide growth and development in the Central Maitland area over the next 20 years.

The structure plan outlines the City's existing strengths and drivers that will influence future growth across the area. These key drivers include:

- Significant **heritage** elements, comprising individual heritage structures and conservation areas (which contain contributory buildings or streetscapes).
- Almost the whole of Central Maitland and Horseshoe Bend is a **flood** prone area and likely to be inundated during a 1 in 100 year event. New flood mitigation measures, flood warning systems, innovative building design and construction technology and evacuation processes can be utilised to enable development, renewal and activation in these flood prone areas.
- A **fine-grained** and informal street structure which emerged organically rather than in a planned, grid like pattern like comparable regional centres.
- Smaller houses and lot sizes reflecting the historic nature
- Primacy of **High Street** – with its consistent frontage with a fine grained development pattern – and the emerging role of **Athel D'Ombra Drive** to the south.
- Low to medium **building heights** (predominantly 1 storey, some 2 – 3 storeys, and a number of recent approvals for 4 storey buildings). A number of spires and towers associated with heritage churches and civic buildings appear on the Maitland City profile, and often act as markers on the landscape.
- Land uses:
  - City core is predominantly 'private commercial' land uses including shops, offices and businesses, focused along High Street and Church Street.
  - Concentrations of 'public uses' such as schools, government offices and agencies, cultural and civic uses, at the intersection of High and Hunter Streets, at the southern end of Church Street, and where the street meets the Belmore Bridge and the Long Bridge.
  - Residential land uses in the fringe areas of the City, Horseshoe Bend and the area south east of Ken Tubman Drive and south east of Rose Street are almost exclusively residential.
- High proportion of **undeveloped land** and vacant lots in the study area, particularly to the west of Elgin Street, south of High Street and in Horseshoe Bend.
- Over 34% of the land in central Maitland has **infill potential**. This includes the 14% of land in Central Maitland which is vacant flood prone land in the R1 residential zone. Other areas of potential infill are surface car parks which make up 6% of the land in Central Maitland.

## 6 REVIEW OF MECHANISMS AND OPTIONS

International, national and local research has shown three key options or ‘mechanisms’ available to Council to influence and facilitate the provision of affordable and adaptable housing. These mechanisms can integrate with, where necessary, and recognise the hierarchy of existing planning frameworks and policies within which they can be implemented as part of the Action Plan. The three key mechanisms are:

- Land use planning system
- Partnerships
- Government funding opportunities.

Best practice tells us that there is no ‘one size fits all’ solution, nor is there any one mechanism or any one party solely responsible for the provision of affordable and adaptable housing. Stakeholders that will play a role in each mechanism are therefore identified in the Action Plan.

This section of the AAHAP provides a brief overview of the three mechanisms and associated strategies available to Council to influence and facilitate the provision of affordable and adaptable housing.

### 6.1 Mechanism 1: Land use planning system

Council's ability to influence housing affordability and housing outcomes more broadly, is largely through its traditional responsibilities of strategic land use planning and policy setting, development control, building approval and infrastructure provision.

Whilst the planning system alone cannot directly deliver affordable housing, it does play a major role in facilitating the delivery of new housing – thus helping to address mismatches between supply and demand – and can be used to help to stimulate the delivery of more affordable housing product. Planning interventions can also help to improve general market efficiencies.

Possible mechanisms available to Maitland City Council are summarised in the table below.

Mechanism		Description
<b>LAND SUPPLY AND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES</b>		
1	Residential land Strategy and monitoring	Council should continue to monitor, assess and update the residential capacity of land across the LGA through the MUSS, to ensure that at least 15 years supply is available. This including monitoring of potential infill on vacant sites, redevelopment opportunities, council assets and greenfield supply. Ongoing monitoring of the MUSS should incorporate updated information on environmental matters (flooding, biodiversity, etc), population data of households, and infrastructure capacity as the information becomes available through detailed studies.
2	Betterment capture	This is a form of development contribution used most effectively in large scale rezoning projects where there is opportunity to gain significant value uplift, created when the scope or intensity of permissible development is increased. The contribution value is often linked back to works for a public purpose that flow back to, and benefit, the community. Affordable housing could form one type of benefit for a ‘public purpose’. This approach is currently not used in NSW and would require significant reform. Negotiated agreements (i.e. VPA) are sometimes used to achieve the same outcome.

Mechanism		Description
<b>PLANNING INCENTIVES, BONUSES OR POLICIES</b>		
3	Planning process incentives	Opportunities to fast-track the development assessment process by increasing the range of 'deemed to comply' development or a commitment to 'fast-track' approvals for certain types of projects (e.g. projects involving affordable housing component).
4	Planning bonuses, incentives or concessions	<p>Planning bonuses support lower-cost housing for private rental or home ownership by sharing in the profit created by a specified planning bonus (e.g. increased FSR) by providing a contribution towards local affordable housing. The contribution can be in the form of direct provision of affordable housing within the development, or monetary contribution towards an affordable housing program of Council (if one were to be implemented).</p> <p>For example, Waverley Council's LEP (Clause 4.4B) provides incentives for providing affordable rental housing by permitting greater FSRs where affordable housing is a component of development.</p> <p>Planning incentives can include 'graduated standards' which use performance-based planning standards to increase site yield and facilitate the provision of affordable housing in designated area. Examples include open space standards (i.e. % of landscaped area) that increase proportionally to the size of the dwelling / number of bedrooms or; car parking standards that reflect the location or the needs of future residents of building (i.e. less car parking for development within walking distance of the centre). Graduated standards can be offered if affordable housing is a component of the new development.</p>
5	Planning controls – enabling, encouraging or requiring a mix of housing types	To achieve opportunities for diverse housing types at different price points within new development areas, introduce policies that require a certain mix (%) of dwelling types and sizes in a development. The mix should be based on a detailed analysis of the local market and demand and supply issues. Landcom's <i>Universal Housing Design Guidelines</i> could be used and adopted as a basis to explore the wide range of housing types available to facilitate adaptable housing.
6	Adaptable housing guidelines	Council could review and expand its existing development policies to include a broader range of adaptable, universal and flexible housing design options. Some Councils are adopting elements of guidelines prepared by industry and developers to improve the provision of affordable and adaptable housing, particularly inclusion of additional objectives and criteria into DCP's. Organisations which have produced such best practice guidelines include Landcom, the Master Builders Association and Livable Housing Australia.
<b>NEGOTIATED AGREEMENTS</b>		
7	Negotiated agreement for affordable housing	It is possible to generate contributions, whether financial, on-site or off-site through negotiated planning or developer agreements. Developers may enter into a negotiated agreement with Council for the provision of affordable housing in conjunction with a development through a Voluntary Planning Agreement (VPA).
<b>MANDATORY REQUIREMENTS</b>		
8	Inclusionary zoning policy (mandatory or non-mandatory)	<p>Inclusionary zoning means incorporating a certain use or facility in approved developments. Inclusionary zoning can be applied to the provision of affordable housing in new developments by requiring a proportion of dwellings in the development to be 'affordable' (e.g. a certain per cent of floor space, or a certain number of dwellings).</p> <p>This can be secured either by Council retaining dwellings or selling dwellings to a community housing provider at an affordable price point to be held for a period of time or in perpetuity.</p> <p>Inclusionary zoning offers a way to achieve access to land for</p>

Mechanism		Description
		affordable housing and tenure mix especially for larger, master planned sites. Mandatory inclusionary zoning policies are used in South Australia, ACT and the Northern Territory. Various local NSW Councils have similar policies applying to their own LGA.
<b>BARRIER REDUCTION STRATEGIES</b>		
9	Building controls – removing unnecessary requirements	To ensure that planning controls in new release areas do not add unnecessarily to the costs of housing production, Council could encourage innovative approaches to residential development which provide more affordable but acceptable standards to certain building requirements, where it can be justified (as specified in a DCP). This is useful to remove onerous controls that add to the cost of development unnecessarily. For example, car parking concessions already offered for some development types.
10	Covenants – eliminating exclusionary requirements on title	Restrictive covenants on title, such as provisions to limit the use of a property or prohibiting certain uses (such as boarding houses), or covenants that mandate high-cost finishes that add to the cost of development, can impact the construction cost and therefore housing prices, or can limit opportunities for development of affordable housing. Preventing such covenants should be adopted as a minimum policy.
<b>PROTECTIVE MECHANISMS</b>		
11	Impact mitigation conditions	In areas where low-cost housing such as caravan parks and manufactured home estates are subject to redevelopment pressure, or where affordable housing is being removed, Council could attach conditions to the development consent to compensate for the loss. This compensation could be through the developer providing an equivalent supply of affordable housing within the site or off-site, or a cash contribution/ relocation costs to displaced residents.
12	Social impact assessment requirement	Council could make it a requirement for applicants to undertake a social impact assessment to assess the housing impacts of all major developments, such as tourism developments. A review of the current DCP would be required.
13	Controls to protect low-cost housing supply	Council should ensure that existing State controls under SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 are used effectively, including the application of mandatory contributions for development that proposes to reduce the overall supply of affordable housing
14	Covenants – to protect affordable housing	Covenants on title can also be used as protection mechanisms to ensure affordable housing is retained as such in the long term. This approach is used to protect housing developed under the SEPP (Housing for Seniors and People with a Disability) wherein a covenant on title prohibits use of the land for anything but seniors housing.
<b>COSTS AND CHARGES</b>		
15	Infrastructure charges and prices	Financial incentives could be considered as a way to facilitate more affordable housing. Offering 'carrot' incentives to the private sector to encourage the provision of affordable housing could be by way of reducing developer contributions for developers willing to provide affordable housing. Spreading charges (DA fees, subdivision fees, S. 94 fees) or recurrent or delayed payments are ways of reducing up-front costs of development where the development involves an affordable housing component.
16	Rates	Council could use its rate base to develop and construct affordable housing. This approach is especially useful in partnership with a community housing provider as landlord. This could be through a special rate levy (i.e. 1% of Council's rate base could be dedicated to affordable housing projects) or, through a rate rebate to rental properties with low income tenants. Alternatively, Council could offer rate rebates or discounts on properties where there is a genuine affordable housing development undertaken. This option could also assist in the retention of affordable housing in the long term.



Mechanism		Description
17	Use of Council assets	Council could use surplus land for affordable housing development through donation (therefore reducing the end price of residential units), partnerships or could defer payments, thereby reducing the upfront development costs. Council could also partner with adjoining landowners to consolidate lots and generate more development, with a proportion dedicated as affordable housing product and sold or put into the ownership of a community housing provider.

## 6.2 Mechanism 2: Strategic Partnerships

Partnerships between Council and other housing stakeholders can be used to deliver more affordable and adaptable housing product. Three types of partnership approaches are considered:

1. Long term provision of affordable housing through a community housing provider
2. Initiate affordable housing for intervention with the private sector and Council
3. A combination of 1 and 2.

As many local Councils seek new ways to influence the delivery of affordable housing, one of the emerging solutions has been stronger support for, and developing partnerships, with the growing non-profit community housing sector.

Community housing is one of the three ways social housing is provided in NSW (the others being Social Housing and Aboriginal Housing). Community housing offers secure, affordable, long-term housing – usually rental housing – for people on low to moderate incomes with a housing need. The main types of community housing providers include housing associations, housing co-operatives, faith-based providers (e.g. Catholic groups) and crisis accommodation providers.

Not-for-profit community housing organisations have a charter to manage housing for low-to-moderate income and special needs households. Many now have staff with specific skills and experience in tenancy and property management. Affordable housing delivered by, or in partnership with, a community housing provider under the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP is retained for a minimum of 10 years as a requirement of the SEPP.

One of the major benefits of community housing providers is the ability to provide new homes directly to the people that need them. Many community housing providers use eligibility criteria to ensure new housing is targeted to low income earners and other target groups identified as in need of housing in the local area. The housing is also held in the long-term (usually through 10+ year agreements) by the community housing provider, but could be sold after 10 years.

There are many opportunities for the Council, private sector, government, or a combination, to partner with community housing providers to deliver affordable housing. The role of partnerships between the public, private and not-for-profit sectors in housing and urban policy has been stimulated by policy initiatives such as the National Affordable Housing Agreement (NAHA) and various Government funding programs (refer to Mechanism 3 below) to encourage diversity and growth among community housing providers.

The NAHA and other funding schemes (i.e. HAF) have also brought about partnerships between Government and the private sector to provide affordable housing for purchase, with savings passed on to the end purchaser who qualifies through eligibility criteria.

Recent NSW Government investments have provided a significant boost to community housing providers to develop new affordable housing and increase their housing stock. A number of community housing providers currently operating in Maitland and have properties that can be developed as affordable (and adaptable) housing.

### 6.3 Mechanism 3: Government funding

Until recently, the Government's approach to influence housing outcomes was to provide new social and affordable rental housing through State Housing Authorities that built, owned and managed public housing. However, since the 1980s, new market-driven approaches have been adopted. These involve mixing private and public funding, making providers compete for funds and cross-subsidising between market and social housing (Lawson et al., 2010).

Another trend which emerged concurrently with new market-driven approaches was a focus on providing a greater mix of housing and tenure types in new communities. The objective is not to isolate areas of public housing but to integrate various forms of affordable housing – public, private and mixed-density housing – in new housing developments. These objectives also expand to include the provision of mixed housing which is integrated with public transport, employment and social and community facilities.

Governments have therefore sought ways in which to encourage and facilitate the inclusion of affordable housing in new developments through alternative funding options. One of the most recent trends in housing funding is for funding to be explicitly allocated for affordable housing on a competitive basis. Housing providers compete by tender/application to receive funding in order to build new affordable housing, or for infrastructure provision that is linked back to affordable housing provision as a result of the value uplift or time and cost savings. Some of the competitive funding programs that have been used since 2007 to help fund affordable housing include:

- Building Better Regional Cities (BBRC) funding initiative
- National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS)
- Housing Affordability Fund (HAF)
- Nation Building Economic Stimulus Plan.

More recently, the NSW Government has also sought to enter into joint venture and development partnerships to leverage off its funding programs and funding additional affordable housing. Examples include Minto in Campbelltown LGA and Redfern-Waterloo.

Maitland City Council was recently successful in gaining \$11.3 Million in the BBRC funding initiative. The BBRC initiative is focused on affordable housing provision and sustainable communities. This presents a significant and timely opportunity for Council to leverage off the funding and involve other stakeholders in boosting affordable housing provision. This can occur both by using Council's own assets in the city centre and partnering with community housing providers and the private sector.

## 7 AFFORDABLE AND ADAPTABLE HOUSING ACTION PLAN

Maitland City Council together with the community has established a vision for affordable and adaptable housing provision in the Maitland area. Based on this vision and supported by guiding principles adopted from the Housing NSW Centre of Affordable Housing, a range of objectives have been established to achieve increased affordable and adaptable housing in Maitland.

These objectives can be achieved through the implementation of various actions undertaken by, and on behalf of, Council. These actions form the basis of the AAHAP.

This section outlines the vision and supporting guiding principles, objectives and associated actions for affordable and adaptable housing in Maitland.

## 7.1 Vision

The vision of this AAHAP is to provide:

**“Diverse and affordable housing options in Maitland available throughout all life stages”.**

This vision is one of the goals of the Maitland Community Strategic Plan 2011-2021, which was developed in collaboration with the community. This vision has therefore been adopted as the driving vision of this AAHAP.

## 7.2 Guiding principles

Guiding principles that propose to underpin this vision and the AAHAP are:

- **Increased provision of affordable and adaptable housing** – providing a framework to retain affordable housing in the short and medium term
- **Appropriate housing provision** — commitment to providing access to housing that is appropriate and affordable for all sectors of the community
- **Openness and transparency** — engage with all interest groups in open debate about how housing problems are to be defined, what issues are to be addressed and prioritised, what solutions are to be considered, what recommendations are to be made and what solutions are to be implemented. This principle also assists in understanding household needs and trends data
- **Partnerships** — commitment to a collaborative approach to facilitate and deliver affordable and adaptable housing between Council, the community, private sector and all levels of Government
- **Fairness and equity** — any costs and benefits of policy outcomes are to be fairly distributed among all residents or all interest groups, with an emphasis on ensuring that the least well-off receive appropriate priority
- **Efficiency and effectiveness** — public resources are applied in such a way as to maximise beneficial outputs and outcomes per dollar expenditure
- **Simplicity** — recommendations should be simple to implement and administer and the costs of administration held in check
- **Sustainability** — provide housing in a way that contributes to creating a socially economically or environmentally sustainable community.

### 7.3 Objectives

Nine objectives of the AAHAP have been developed based on the vision and the affordability and housing issues facing Maitland's current and future population:

**Objective 1** – To achieve and provide greater **housing diversity** consistent with community needs in the longer term and **viable** for the development industry.

**Objective 2** – To provide greater **housing choice** by encouraging housing of different types, size and tenure in suitable locations, at a range of prices within the reach of households of varying financial capacity.

**Objective 3** – To provide housing in a way that contributes to the **sustainability** of communities and is compatible with the goal of environmental sustainability, and is **well-designed**.

**Objective 4** – To facilitate **adaptable** and accessible housing that can respond to the changing needs of residents.

**Objective 5** – To ensure that the location of housing is **integrated** with infrastructure, services, employment and facilities, and to social and support networks.

**Objective 6** – To engage with the all stakeholders to ensure the needs of individuals and families are understood, and information about the development process is conveyed to the community to build understanding.

**Objective 7** – To ensure affordable housing is retained and managed for **long-term supply**.

**Objective 8** – To encourage Council to **facilitate, be a partner and a catalyst** for the provision of affordable and adaptable housing.

**Objective 9** – To utilise Council assets appropriately and investigate opportunities for affordable housing provision using **Council land and assets**.

## 7.4 Action plan

The Maitland City Council Affordable and Adaptable Housing Action Plan (AAHAP) is a practical guide of actions for Council to take responsibility on and lead. It proposes Council work together with other housing stakeholders, including the private sector, community and other levels of Government, to ensure that affordable and adaptable housing is delivered in Maitland. For this reason, the Action Plan has been developed in collaboration with the community and private sector, as well as Maitland City Council staff.

The AAHAP includes a list of actions to achieve each of the objectives of the Action Plan.

For each action, the AAHAP sets out a target or outcome to be achieved, details on who in Council is responsible lead the action (as well as potential external roles), and a timeframe with priorities to undertake the action. The timeframe is colour coded as follows:

Period	Timeframe	Colour code
Immediate term	Next financial year (2013/14)	Yellow
Short term	1 to 2 years	Light Green
Medium term	2 to 5 years	Light Blue
Long term	5 to 10 years	Pink

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 1 – To achieve and provide greater housing diversity consistent with community needs and viable for the development industry</b>				
<b>1.1</b>	<p>Manage land supply to ensure adequate land is available to meet demand for residential housing in different markets (rental and purchase) and at different price points across Maitland.</p> <p>Monitoring should collate lot size, house type, number of lots, timing and target market data. This could be similar to a local 'Maitland' version of the MDP program used by the Department of Planning &amp; Infrastructure. Monitoring of the land and housing supply delivery and pipeline progress means the Council can become better equipped to respond to changes in demand.</p>	Monitor progress of land development against MUSS targets on a monthly basis, including tracking, monitoring and reporting on developers' and builders' pipeline	Council	Immediate & ongoing
<b>1.2</b>	Ensure all Council policies recognise the need for housing supply and affordable and adaptable housing, in their underlying objectives.	Incorporate objectives from this Action Plan in all related Council policies	Council	Immediate & ongoing
<b>1.3</b>	Supplement land release targets in the MUSS by developing incentives to encourage community housing investment in rental accommodation.	Undertake actions related to community housing providers (see Objective 7)	Council	Short
<b>1.4</b>	<p>Investigate the viability of planning incentives, levies or concessions for affordable and/or adaptable aged care/seniors housing provision in Council's existing planning framework, in consultation with the private sector.</p> <p>For example, incentives to be investigated could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ FSR bonuses for affordable housing</li> <li>▪ Car parking concessions*</li> <li>▪ Alternative building design standards (e.g. smaller apartment/dwelling size, reduced setbacks) where</li> </ul>	<p>Amend MLEP/MDCP and other planning policies to introduce affordable housing incentives and/or concessions</p> <p>Facilitate workshops with private sector to investigate appropriate concessions and bonuses that would be make development viable</p>	Council	Short

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
	<p>good urban design outcomes are still achieved.</p> <p>This will require development of a financial model to ascertain the financial 'break even' point for affordable housing developed by the private sector, based on land value and cost of construction and sales/rental prices. .</p> <p>* Concessions for road transport items in the Section 94 Plan are proposed for affordable housing units approved in Central Maitland as part of the BBRC/Athel D'Ombra Drive project.</p>			
<b>1.5</b>	<p>Planning approvals should ensure that the land released each year provides a range of block sizes for purchase in diverse locations across Maitland.</p>	<p>Monitor subdivision applications/ approvals to ensure housing mix targets (refer Objective 2) are met</p>	<p>Council Private sector</p>	<p>Short</p>
<b>1.6</b>	<p>Review Council DA assessment and rezoning processes and timeframes, and develop a policy which includes process-related improvements to support affordable housing. For example, targets for faster approval times; streamlined planning approvals process for affordable housing DAs.</p>	<p>Implement internal Council process benchmarks and KPIs to support efficient housing delivery</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Short</p>
<b>1.7</b>	<p>Work with, and advocate to, the NSW Government for a strengthened state-wide approach to addressing housing affordability.</p>	<p>Work with and implement the new (urban release) affordable housing policy</p>	<p>Council NSW Government</p>	<p>Short</p>
<b>1.8</b>	<p>Investigate legal mechanisms available (following release of Planning White Paper) to collect developer contributions for affordable housing, or develop a new (non-statutory) Council Policy to require affordable housing provision as part of new development.</p>	<p>Amend Section 94 Plan or develop Council Policy for affordable housing provision</p>	<p>Council</p>	<p>Medium</p>



No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 2 – To provide greater housing choice by encouraging housing of different types, size and tenure (rental and home ownership) in suitable locations, at a range of prices within the reach of households of varying financial capacity</b>				
2.1	Undertake a comprehensive housing analysis of Maitland’s changing demographic trends combined with property economics, to develop a Housing Policy aimed at improving the provision of a range of housing options at different price points tailored to Maitland.	Commission a Housing Study to support housing outcomes across the LGA and include outcomes into a new Local Housing Policy	Council	Short
2.2	Increase diversity in the housing market by incorporating new affordable housing and ‘house and land’ products into new housing development by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Encouraging smaller lot sizes (LEP allows down to 300m<sup>2</sup>) in more areas (greenfield and infill) across Maitland by amending DCP controls for minimum site coverage and setbacks to reflect smaller lot sizes;</li> <li>Reduced minimum lot sizes by enabling lots down to 250sqm to reflect the NSW Government’s Housing Code.</li> </ul>	Amend MLEP/MDCP to encourage the provision of affordable and diverse housing by identifying graduated planning standards for site coverage and setbacks to reflect smaller lot size/dwelling typologies, with a target of at least 20% smaller lot sizes within the first 5 years	Council	Short
2.3	Investigate alternative housing design options/guidelines to enable appropriate development in flood affected areas, focusing in particular on Central Maitland. For example, enable habitable rooms above non-habitable ground floor development.	Undertake investigation into best practice in flood design Finalise Adaptive Reuse DCP for Central Maitland Expand/adapt the Adaptive Reuse DCP controls for Central Maitland to other areas	Council	Short
2.4	Investigate new building and planning controls to facilitate conversion of existing large dwellings into dual occupancy dwellings to enable people to age-in-place.	Amend MLEP/MDCP controls and other planning policies to enable more dual occupancy development	Council	Short

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>2.5</b>	Increase the housing mix in new release areas by encouraging or mandating a minimum proportion (%) of small lots dispersed throughout a development, but located close to public transport and amenity. A mandatory clause could be included into the LEP or DCP depending on the level of flexibility Council want to retain.	Amend MLEP/MDCP and other planning policies to encourage the provision of affordable and diverse housing	Council	Medium
<b>2.6</b>	Undertake an analysis of boarding houses in Maitland and the region, and develop criteria for boarding house location and design, for inclusion in a DCP or related policy as a means of supporting housing diversity.	Undertake analysis of boarding houses and thereafter amend MLEP/MDCP and other planning policies to encourage boarding house development in Maitland	Council	Medium
<b>2.7</b>	Encourage secondary dwellings on lots greater than 400m <sup>2</sup> to support the objectives and provisions of the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP.	Amend MLEP/MDCP and other planning policies to support secondary dwellings	Council	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 3 – To provide housing in a way that contributes to the sustainability of communities and is compatible with the goal of environmental sustainability, and is well designed</b>				
<b>3.1</b>	Facilitate 'lead by example' and demonstration projects that incorporate examples of highly sustainable, accessible and adaptable housing to showcase good design outcomes in new affordable housing developments on a range of lot sizes, focusing on smaller blocks.	Showcase elements of good design, accessibility and sustainability for projects involving Council assets or where Council is a partner	Council & private sector	Medium
<b>3.2</b>	Enter into an EOI and work with the development industry to establish demonstration villages showcasing affordable land and housing packages.	Regularly meet with developers and builders (refer to Objective 6)	Council & private sector	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 4 – To facilitate adaptable and accessible housing that can respond to the changing needs of residents</b>				
4.1	Identify development sites in Central Maitland for housing redevelopment opportunities and in particular the provision of aged housing/seniors accommodation Ensure the supply of sufficient land to meet the increasing demand for aged/.	Target at least 10% increase in aged care/seniors housing development within 5 years	Council	Short
4.2	Review the MDCP to strengthen controls for adaptable housing in accordance with best practice 'flexible' and 'universal' housing and neighbourhood design. This includes identifying gaps and potential additions to the current adaptable housing guidelines.	Undertake review and identify amendments to MDCP	Council	Short
4.3	Develop a programme and alliance with community groups to support the transition of the elderly to more suitable accommodation (i.e. smaller houses, aged care facility, etc.) through a program, agency or dedicated council officer position, that will assist seniors to move from one type of housing to another.	Establish Terms of Reference and scope for new program/agency or council officer position	Council	Short
4.4	Work with developers at the rezoning stage to identify opportunity sites for aged housing, and potentially offer planning incentives such as FSR bonuses for adaptable aged care/seniors housing (in accordance with provisions established in . Council's role would be to facilitate partnerships between the development industry and aged care providers to enhance the provision of aged housing at the rezoning stage.	Facilitate partnerships between the development industry and aged care providers	Council and private sector	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 5 – To ensure that the location of housing is integrated with infrastructure, services, employment and facilities, and to social and support networks</b>				
5.1	Undertake an audit of existing infrastructure across the LGA to identify areas of underutilised infrastructure/additional capacity, in order to then identify areas that would be suitable for upzoning or redevelopment. The initial areas should be close to town centres, railway line or public transport.	Council seek funding under the Planning Reform Fund to conduct infrastructure audit	Council	Immediate
5.2	Investigate the viability of revised engineering standards (e.g. roads, stormwater) based on new innovation and technologies to reduce upfront costs on development but also assist ongoing maintenance costs for Council, noting that quality of infrastructure should not be compromised.	Undertake review of engineering standards	Council	Short
5.3	Investigate the viability of amendments to the Section 94 Contributions Plan such as deferred contributions payments to later stages of development (i.e. subdivision registration), bonding arrangements or a new levy/dedication scheme for affordable housing.	Undertake developer contributions review preview to assess viability of amendments to Maitland’s Contributions Plan	Council	Medium
5.4	Undertake a review, and update, the current standards for social facilities and infrastructure provision across the LGA to facilitate sharing of spaces and places, reduce unnecessary land-take and achieve better integration of housing and infrastructure.  The review should consider potential alternative requirements for social facilities and infrastructure provision for affordable housing development, particularly in new release areas, with an aim to reduce costs but not quality of infrastructure provision.	Undertake review of standards for social facilities and infrastructure provision (as part of recreation and community facilities review)	Council	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
5.5	Investigate potential amendments to Councils existing planning policies to support integration of housing with social community, transport and other forms of infrastructure (e.g. controls for small lots housing in new release areas which specific that small lot housing must be 'salt and peppered' across an estate but located in areas of high amenity such as along main roads, and/or close to public transport, shops and open space).	Amend MLEP/MDCP and other Council policies	Council	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 6 – To engage with the all stakeholders to ensure the needs of individuals and families are understood, and information about the development process is conveyed to the community to build understanding</b>				
6.1	Educate Council staff and councillors about the broad scope of 'affordable housing' and 'adaptable housing' related to this Action Plan and its impacts and implications on various functions of Council	Run a series of sessions with Council staff	Council	Immediate
6.2	Gain a better understanding of the need for social housing in Maitland to establish (and maintain) an accurate and up to date list of social housing need, uptake and supply in Maitland.  This could be undertaken as part of the detailed Housing Analysis (Action item 2.1)	Work with NSW Centre for Affordable Housing after the release of updated rental data based on 2011 Census	Council	Short
6.3	Work with aged care providers and seniors' organisations in the establishment of a program, agency or council officer position to assist seniors to move from one type of housing to another.	Meet with aged care and senior organisations	Council & related organisations	Short
6.4	Investigate cost, role and KPI and, if appropriate, appoint an affordable housing officer who monitors, develops and runs education programs relating to affordable and adaptable housing delivery and progress.	Investigate and appoint affordable housing officer	Council	Short
6.5	Create cultural change in the broader community to change perceptions about small lot housing, social housing, affordable and adaptable housing, by educating stakeholders about different housing types, designs and lot sizes, as a means of increasing support from the community for affordable housing initiatives and overcoming the stigma associated with 'social housing'	Develop communications and engagement strategy (including actions such as developing brochures, holding information sessions, etc.)	Council	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
6.6	Greater community education about the general costs and process of infrastructure provision and housing development	Implement communication, engagement and education strategy	Council	Medium



No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 7 – To ensure affordable housing is retained and managed for long term supply</b>				
<b>7.1</b>	Understand the role and potential management/ownership options for community housing providers, and process to follow, if Council decides to enter into partnerships with these providers as part of BBRC program.	Meet with community housing providers and provide information back to Council/the community as part of the engagement strategy	Council	Immediate
<b>7.2</b>	Monitor affordable housing supply and demand based on key performance indicators, including population, housing or demographic characteristics showing signs of change.	Work with Housing for NSW and real estate agents and undertake regular Housing Study reviews	Housing NSW	Short
<b>7.3</b>	Actively seek, facilitate and/or enter into partnerships with community housing providers to deliver long term affordable housing supply.	Facilitate at least one partnership between a community housing provide and the private sector as a case study	Council & private sector & community housing provider	Medium
<b>7.4</b>	Enter into a partnership with a community housing provider if a concession is introduced, in order to manage affordable housing produced as a result of the concession in the long term.	Enter into partnership/agreement with a community housing provider to produce and manage affordable housing	Council	Long

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 8 – To encourage Council to facilitate, be a partner and a catalyst for the provision of affordable and adaptable housing</b>				
8.1	Work with the State Government to become a pilot project for a new Housing Study.	Meet with Department of Planning and Infrastructure	Council	Immediate
8.2	Implement BBRC project to create uplift in strategic areas as a way to support affordable housing provision, in particular by identifying opportunity sites up front (whether Council owned, community housing/not-for-profit or private) and pursuing affordable housing development.	Work with BBRC project team to identify sites and develop options Consult with affected landowners to develop options Establish governance arrangement /formal agreements for housing development	Council Landowners and BBRC project consultants	Immediate
8.3	Actively seek funding and grants related to housing, affordable housing or related strategic planning project to boost financial resources for specific housing development projects (undertaken in partnership with community housing providers, the private sector, or both) or for programs of Council related to housing delivery.  (e.g. apply for funding in round 8 of the NSW Planning Reform Fund – a share in \$1.2 million for projects such as those which implement local or regional strategies and identify areas for future housing – submitted Friday 22 February 2013)	Gain additional funding for a range of housing-related projects  (e.g. more funding to undertake master planning or options development under the BBRC program; or; funding to implement one of the actions of this Action Plan)	Council	Immediate and ongoing
8.4	Develop an Affordable Housing Committee made up of internal Council staff, government stakeholders (i.e. regional office staff of Housing NSW), community housing representatives and development industry representatives.	Regular or at least quarterly meetings held and partnerships developed	Council	Short

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>8.5</b>	Encourage, facilitate and actively enter into PPP's to develop affordable housing where an opportunity has been identified in the council assets audit or through another means.	Meet with targeted landowners after audit of Council assets	Council	Short
<b>8.6</b>	Advocate for new and broader forms of financial/funding models for smaller dwelling types and affordable housing more broadly (e.g. superannuation fund models; e.g. banks loan for smaller dwellings)	Council to advocate and work with State Government	Private sector / Department of Infrastructure and Planning	Medium
<b>8.7</b>	Develop a Council Policy for MOU's and service agreements related to Public Private Partnerships (PPP's) and other partnership models, to ensure transparency and fairness in all Council dealings involving land development.	Develop policy and related documents	Council	Medium
<b>8.8</b>	Implement planning incentives and bonus schemes to create incentives for PPP's (through an EOI basis) to occur by identifying opportunity sites (through audits) and approach adjoining landowners and, in particular, community housing providers/church groups, to enter into partnerships.	Meet with targeted landowners and engage in partnerships	Council	Medium

No.	Action	Targets / outcome	Responsibility	Timeframe
<b>Objective 9 – To utilise Council assets appropriately and investigate opportunities for affordable and adaptable housing provision using Council land and assets</b>				
9.1	Undertake a review/stocktake of existing Council assets in Central Maitland and across the LGA to prioritise land development opportunities and use existing Council assets to assist and facilitate affordable housing delivery, or, to enter into partnerships/joint ventures.	Undertake council assets audit	Council	Short
9.2	Undertake an audit of Council assets in Central Maitland and across the LGA to identify areas or sites that are suitable (due to their location, proximity to services, etc.) for seniors housing development.  Utilise opportunities through Athel D'Ombra Drive project and vacant/car parking lots in Central Maitland as part of Central Maitland Structure Plan	Undertake council assets audit  Meet with seniors housing organisation to understand interest in expanding their facilities and land requirements  Meet with developers to consider Joint Ventures using Council assets	Council	Medium

## 8 CONCLUSION

The provision of affordable and adaptable housing is one of the biggest challenges facing Maitland and many local areas across Australia.

The process of securing the right type of affordable housing that meets local needs, in a manner that is compatible with local character, is complex and strongly influenced by the local housing market, and population, economic and development conditions. There is no 'one size fits all' solution nor is any one party solely responsible for its delivery.

This Action Plan sets out objectives, followed by a range of strategies and actions Council and other stakeholders can implement for each objective, to achieve the vision of providing diverse and affordable housing options in Maitland available throughout all life stages. The Action Plan is based on a review of the demographic and housing issues, statutory and strategic planning framework and international research and best practice relating to affordable and adaptable housing provision.

As planned changes to the framework occur in the future, such as the onset of a new Planning Act for NSW, the action will need to be updated to ensure the outcomes are consistent with the planning system within which housing is planned and developed.