



New Sunshine Coast Planning Scheme Project

Preliminary Public Consultation
10 February- 31 March 2022

BLACKALL RANGE - MALENY **PROPOSAL RESPONSE**

MALENY HOUSING WORKING GROUP
coordinated by Maleny Neighbourhood Centre



Preface

The Maleny Housing Working Group (MHWG) is made up of local housing response groups and was formed under the coordination of the Maleny Neighbourhood Centre (MNC) to look at options for affordable housing in light of the dire housing crisis facing the communities of Maleny and the Blackall Range on Jinibara and Gubbi Gubbi Lands. As the Sunshine Coast Council have also identified affordable housing as a 'Hot Planning Topic' and is inviting comments from the residents of the Sunshine Coast, we have prepared the following report on the affordable housing situation and proposed specific changes to the existing planning scheme to enable more diverse and innovative affordable solutions that take the unique circumstances of the Blackall Range in general, and Maleny in particular.

Document Contributors



Andrew McLean
Eco Villages AU



Annemaree Cotterell
Tiny Towns



Ahtee Chia
Polkadot



Helen Andrew
Priority Purpose



Frances Harper
CHASM Housing



Jason Hilder
Co-Creating
Community



Chris Goldsworthy
Tiny Towns



Jimmy Hirst
Polkadot

MNC



Ritva Vilppola
MHWG
Coordinator



Rick Paget
MNC Centre
Coordinator

Working Group Organisations



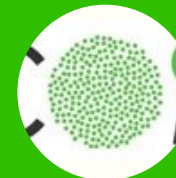
**CHASM
Housing**



**Glass
Housing 55**



Tiny Towns



**Co-Creating
Community**



**Priority
Purpose**



**Eco Villages
AU**



Polkadot

Table of Contents

The Housing Problem

Land Use Planning Proposal 2041

Regional Planning Directions

Local Planning Directions

Hot Planning Topics

Topic 1 | Affordable Living and Housing Affordability

Topic 6 | Secondary Dwellings

Topic 8 | Short-term Accommodation

Suggested Changes

1. District Centre Height Restrictions and Zoning
2. Maleny Town Plan Zoning
3. Rural Workers Accommodation
4. Moveable Dwellings
5. Collaborative Housing Typology
6. Relocatable Home and Caravan Parks

Additional Suggestions

1. Rooming Accommodation
2. Affordable Housing Incentives
3. Housing Design and Construction
4. Housing Commodification
5. First Nations Engagement

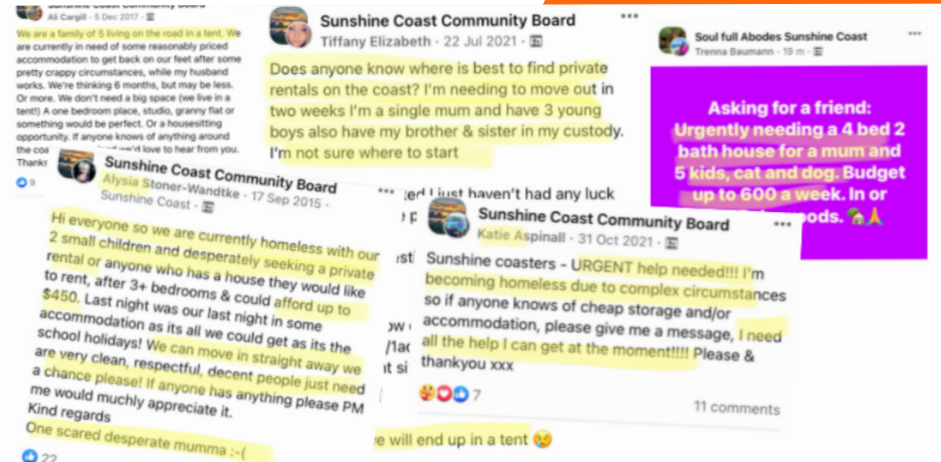
Conclusion

The Housing Problem

There is a dire need to facilitate affordable housing in the Blackall Range. The following number of issues work against affordable housing:

- High property prices: Median property prices over the last year have increased by over 30% [1]
- Lack of rental properties: Rentals are hard to find in Maleny and surrounding areas and prices have increased by 55% since the COVID-19 pandemic [2]
- Expanding Tourism Industry: short-term accommodation are displacing residential accommodation.
- Red Tape and Costs of Building: Land-owners who try to build secondary dwelling within the present code find it difficult, expensive and time-consuming to go through the DA process. This does not facilitate ease, and works against our objective of affordable housing.
- Gentrification: The Blackall Range is currently gentrifying. Demand for property is driving prices up, which is driving long-term residents out - especially young independants and families.

The working group is concerned that proposed changes to the town plan will be so minor that it will not make a material difference to our affordable housing issues. It must.



How Bad Is The Problem?

Bad. At the time of writing this proposal, Maleny had just two residential rental properties available, with a median rent of \$540 a week for a two bedroom house [1]. Median property prices over the last year were \$956,000 for houses and \$547,500 for units [1].

Lower paid casual jobs such as: supermarket checkout operators, cafe staff, cleaners, etc... are now difficult to fill from local residents, as housing has become unaffordable for lower paid workers. This is unsustainable for small communities.

With little change to the proposed planning scheme for Maleny and Blackall range, the affordable housing and homelessness crisis will only get worse.

Homelessness is now affecting the middle socio-economic population. Lower wages are now no longer the problem. Many have nowhere to go. The Maleny Showgrounds had up to 7 families living there until they were all evicted [3]. Council's Environment and Livability Strategy 2017 is in danger of being irrelevant.

Land Use Planning Proposal 2041

Based on the Sunshine Coast Land Use Planning Proposal 2041 Part 1: Proposed Vision and Regional Planning Directions and Part 2: Proposed Local Planning Directions, the working group would like to respond with the following.

Regional Planning Directions

We welcome the new planning scheme project and the working group understands the constraints that the government has and thank the Sunshine Coast Council for offering the opportunity to review the new town plan.

We encourage more First Nations engagement by Council on the challenges and potential solutions to affordable housing.

Local Planning Directions

Transport

- We welcome serious public transport planning and funding.
- We encourage more Council support for alternative transport options such as car-pooling and active infrastructure provisions to minimise car-dependency.

Town Plans

- We welcome the 18 different town plans which allows for each region to hold onto its own character.
- We encourage more emphasis on affordable housing options so residents can live and work in the same area if they choose.
- We encourage more clarification on whether the local plan codes will be retained in the local area plan for the wider region.

We welcome and support the focus on sustainability, biodiversity and liveability aligned with the City Deal 2019.

We encourage further explanations and engagement on the ability to actually meet the vision of the City Deal 2019 with the current changes proposed.

Proposed Changes

- We welcome the “Level of Change” Metre concept which provides an easier understanding of what is anticipated.
- We encourage more consideration on the impact of the proposed low level of change in Blackall Range - Maleny region which is under severe housing stress already. We are concerned that not enough meaningful change will be implemented in the town plan in order to envision a positive future between now and 2041.
- We encourage more significant changes for the Blackall Range - Maleny region as small changes to the plan will not make a material difference to the affordable housing and homelessness consequences our communities are already experiencing.

Hot Planning Topics

Based on the Hot Planning Topics, the working group would like to respond with the following.

Topic 1 | Affordable Living and Housing Affordability

We welcome the whole of this document, and particularly Note 6: Investigate potential for key Council-owned sites to accommodate affordable/community housing projects.

We encourage more consideration of providing affordable housing on the Community Precinct land e.g. in Maleny more housing could be proposed close to the boundary with Cloudwalk.

The remainder of the report provides further context and suggestions from the group on this topic area in particular.

Topic 6 | Secondary Dwellings

Current Situation

Some property owners want to help house others by building secondary dwellings, but the process is far too complex to make this a viable solution to the housing crisis.

The 20 metre rule is too restrictive for some properties. We understand the reason for the 20 metre rules, but our anecdotal research suggests that the 20 metre rules trumps all other considerations. One landowner was made to put the secondary dwelling on a water course, breaking 6-9 of council's own rules, when the natural position for the secondary dwelling was a further 20 metres away.

Working Group Suggestion

- Relax the 20 metre rule, especially in large blocks and/or rural zoning
- Have a council officer dedicated to assisting people through the process of building a secondary dwelling for affordable housing
- Relax the one household rule on an ongoing basis for affordable housing (or define the household more broadly)

Topic 8 | Short-term Accommodation

Current Situation

For many years now, short-term accommodation has been taking rental stock out of circulation which has had an incrementally huge effect on housing affordability and homelesses. This is because property owners can make more money on a short-term stay than full-time residents.

We understand that development post 2014, short-term accommodation development is impact assessable. We are happy to work with the council to float ideas on how this problem can be addressed and incorporate affordable housing.

Working Group Suggestion

- Implement a moratorium on the approval of new short-term accommodation
- Increase land rates for property owners with short stay accommodation
- Introduce a permit system for short-stay accommodation
- Implement pro rata permit option to include short-stay emergency accommodation
- Disincentive property owners wanting to convert a dwelling or accommodation previously offered as long term residential rental accommodation to short-term accommodations

Suggested Changes

The working group would like to propose some suggestions to the Planning Scheme on future land use and developments in Maleny and its surrounding Blackall Range based on our expertise and knowledge in the local affordable housing and homelessness space.

1 | District Centre Height Restrictions and Zoning

Update the zoning and height restrictions in the Maleny District Centre.

Current Situation

There are no affordable dwellings available in or close to the Maleny District Centre. This problem is particularly felt by young independents and the independent elders who need to be close to shops within walking distance as they cannot afford to own cars and public transport is grossly inadequate on the range.

Suggestion Outcomes

Addressing this will increase the affordable housing stock in the town centres while creating a beautiful pedestrian plaza that will be attractive to locals as well as tourists. This can also provide income for property owners, encourage more demographic diversity as well as encourage walkability in the town centre areas which can decrease car-dependency as a result.

Working Group Suggestion

1. Rezone the Maleny District Centre for mixed use and change the height limit to 12m at the rear of the properties of Maple Street which face Bicentenary Lane and Willow Lane; OR
2. Change Height limits to Maleny District Centre Zone to 12 metres where affordable accommodation is provided

For instance, this would allow a podium to be built at the back of the shops on both sides of Maple Street, with car parking on the lower ground level accessible from Bicentenary Lane and Willow Lane. The two upper podium levels can have rooming accommodation at the back and at street level. If the podiums of adjacent properties are connected to create a pedestrian plaza between the accommodation and the shops, it will enhance the appeal of the town centres with cafes, restaurants, and specialty shops fronting onto the plaza.

2 | Maleny Town Plan Zoning

Update the zoning restrictions around the Maleny area.

Current Situation

Maleny's district centre is largely surrounded by low density residential with a protected housing area overlay that further limits development. The protected zones are about maintaining our rural character, so the protected housing could be retained on main arterial roads.



Working Group Suggestion

1. More medium/high density zoning in selected areas, within walking distance to Maleny's district centre.
2. Remove 'protected low density residential' zoning in some sections of Maleny.
3. Allow reduced land size for smaller dwellings without the ability to subdivide.

This must be done with great care, as developers might take advantage to Maleny's detriment. We ask that council do extensive community consultation when implementing this proposal.

3 | Rural Workers Accommodation

Relax existing requirements for rural worker accommodations.

Current Situation

At present, the planning scheme 2014 allows 20 people who are workers on the farm to reside on the farm. This provision is seldom used, and usually only for seasonal workers. This is because families of the farm workers are not allowed to stay on the farm. This means that permanent workers with families have to live off farm. The proposed changes will allow families of workers to live on the farm, hence encouraging an increase in the permanent rural worker population.

Suggestion Outcomes

These four changes will allow affordable housing on farms, especially those on the Blackall Range where most of the farms are fairly close to the town centres where social amenities like schools, shops, medical facilities, and child care are easily accessible.

Working Group Suggestion

The following changes to the Rural Code are proposed to enable this:

1. Change 'persons' to households
2. Change 20 persons to 30 households

3. This relaxation to apply only to resident-managed farms
4. Ownership of the land to be by non-profit or cooperative legal entities

The housing can be in the form of fixed buildings or moveable dwellings.

The housing would be ideally located, where possible, on areas of the farm that do not take up valuable portions of prime agricultural land having consideration to easy access.

4 | Moveable Dwellings

Allow for moveable dwellings such as Tiny Houses.

Current Situation

As houses have got larger and more unaffordable, and household density has dropped, tiny houses have become a go-to solution to the housing problem. Councils, understandably, are reluctant to embrace this solution, however Tiny Houses will make a rapid and quality response to the housing affordability and availability problem.

Suggestion Outcomes

The inclusion of a Mobile Dwelling housing type will provide additional innovative and rapid-build solutions in affordable housing and certainty to an emerging industry sector to help Tiny House Builders and Owners keep build-costs affordable. Tiny and small communities can quickly form in Council areas that allow Tiny Houses - as the 'missing middle' infill dwellings - with property owner/occupiers and tenants creating healthy collaborative communities on under-utilised or vacant land, urban backyards and large rural properties.

What is a Moveable Dwelling or "Tiny House"?

- Are usually self-reliant dwellings that are built on wheels or skids.
- Are small traditional houses (up to 40M2 in size) that can be built to conform to the National Construction Code, albeit on a trailer, or on skids (ie to be transported by or on a detachable trailer), and also conform to VSB1.
- Are robust 'permanent' dwellings that, with due care and maintenance, will last as long as any traditional house (ie 50-100 years), especially when built and/or certified by an industry certified Builder specialising in Tiny Houses.
- Could be used as primary and/or secondary dwellings on a permanent and temporary basis.
- In times of environmental or man-made disasters, Movable Dwellings can be relocated out of high-risk areas and/or rapidly deployed as part of a local disaster response effort.
- Given their fast-built eco-friendly designs, size and maneuverability, Movable Dwellings can be sited as single or multiple dwellings, appropriate to lot size, zoning, household and/or community growth - without negatively impacting natural environment and wildlife.
- Can be owned by the tenant, landowner, or an investor.
- As self-contained affordable dwellings, they can be rapidly and readily made available (ie on task and/or rent exchange) for displaced, low- or medium- socio-economic and/or eco-friendly individuals, couples and small households for use as emergency, short stay, ongoing or permanent 'affordable housing'.

Working Group Suggestion

1. Create a dwelling typography of 'Movable Dwellings' (or Tiny Houses) as distinct to caravans and permanent buildings.
2. Allow 'Movable Dwellings' as Primary and Secondary Dwellings on a permanent and temporary basis, subject to a revised 'Tiny House' Permit System and timeframes.
3. Add and incentivise a new category of 'Affordable Housing' within the 'Tiny House Permit System' - stipulating rental rates must be set at a minimum of 20% below market in line with or listed via National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS).
4. Revise the current Permit System for Tiny House sites to be allowed on property within low and medium density zones, subject to appropriate conditions. Permit conditions would include an application fee, assessment process and time frames. Permits could be valid for up to 10 years (min 2 years) with potential to extend at the end of the period following a review of compliance with conditions approved. Permits can be revoked if non-compliant. This is an easy change for Council to make - some councils have already done so. It does not require a change to the Planning Scheme, only a new administrative procedure.
5. Movable Dwellings, when permanently sited, could be attached to the land via screw or diamond piers and wheels skirted/covered, to comply with the Tiny House Permit system, should this be deemed necessary.
6. The Permit System could stipulate that non-compliant Movable Dwellings need to be certified by Building Certifier and Vehicle Inspector (as relevant) and/or permanently attached to an appropriate site.
7. The Working Group is willing to work with council to reframe the Tiny Houses Permit System and Fact Sheet.

5 | Collaborative Housing Typology

Create new “collaborative housing” building type for resident-led projects.

Current Situation

Many people are flooding to the coast for a simpler life out of the city. A percentage of them are also wanting to live more collaboratively. The current town plan doesn't allow them to do so. For example, five ageing couples who want to build or retrofit a ‘McMansion’ so they can support each other instead of going to a nursing home will have trouble. Co-housing groups, such as this example, are constantly thwarted by the current planning scheme. People wanting to start eco villages and grow their own food in the country are simply unable to.

Collaborative Housing - at present the typical multiple dwelling development are multi-level units, townhouses, and a few cluster housing with each dwelling on their own subdivision or strata title.

Proposed “Collaborative

1. No subdivision. This prohibition will ensure that the land cost component of the development is kept low. Subdivision will increase the cost of the land drastically. At present only one dwelling plus a secondary dwelling is permitted on an allotment. Council's concern (and our concern as well) is that permitting subdivision will open the flood gates to for-profit developers to subdivide for maximum profit.
2. Such developments have to be limited to not-for-profit organisations, housing cooperatives, self-managed resident groups, and other legal entities that have the expressed objective of providing affordable housing. For example, the land to be owned by a Community Land Trust that holds the land ownership in perpetuity and the residents can rent sites for their houses or to rent houses owned by the Trust. This will allow developments modelled on co-housing with fixed as well as removable buildings. These communities would be self governed internally while the Trust or housing co-operative will manage the land purchase and housing development.
3. Buildings can include a common kitchen, dining, living/meeting space, shared laundry, workshop, etc. This will allow the individual

ve Housing" Conditions

residential units to be smaller as well as to promote greater social connection.

4. Buildings clustered around or to one or more sides of a community car free open space that can include play structures for children, seating, food and ornamental gardens, gazebos, and such.
5. Each cluster to be limited to a maximum of 35 households based on a co-housing model of self-managed communities.
6. Car parking to be separated from the communal open space outside the cluster for safety, especially of children.
7. Buildings to include fixed structures, relocatable houses, and tiny houses. Tiny houses to be tied down to the ground for safety.
8. Such developments can be engaged in high value rural production like microgreens and mushrooms and high yielding permaculture food forests. This will retain prime agricultural land in production. The predominant use of rural residential land are extensive lawns, ornamental trees and gardens.

Working Group Suggestion

1. A new definition to include "collaborative Housing" as a new housing type available for resident led projects.
2. Increase multiple dwellings close to the town centres, and to allow collaborative housing in Rural Residential Zones, and increase zones for multiple dwellings under certain conditions.
3. Rural Residential Zones on the Blackall Range are located fairly close to the town centres and hence are well suited to be developed for multiple dwellings. Such properties are typically owned by wealthy older couples who soon realised that as they aged, they can't maintain the large grounds themselves or have to hire somebody else for the constant maintenance required in the verdant climate of the Blackall Range. Hence these properties change hands on a regular basis with ever escalating prices.
4. Collaborative housing could be measured using a density matrix, and therefore could be used in the following zones - low, medium, high and rural residential. Council could control densities - like they are used to doing for highrise developments. Presumably on a sliding scale. (ex, a 2 acre low-density residential block may be able to accommodate 20 people without causing undue stress on council infrastructure.
5. Permanent or temporary housing.

6 | Relocatable Home and Caravan Parks

Consider more relocatable home parks and caravan parks in the land-use planning process.

Current Situation

Caravan and RV Parks also have an important role, especially as more retirees are travelling around Australia, irrespective of the potential for getting caught up or delayed in natural disasters or having a back-up housing to return to. More and more, our younger generations as well as independent elders are being drawn to reside in caravans and recreational vehicles as more affordable accommodation, whether on formal and informal sites. More needs to be done to ensure every Australian has an affordable housing option near where they can find work of the amenities they require to sustain a reasonably healthy lifestyle.

Suggestion Outcomes

Relocatable Home Parks and moveable dwelling sites could serve to offer both premium and affordable solutions, especially when wrapped around 'resort-style' facilities. This could increase local accommodation options for Tourists, Holiday Makers, Tree Change Migrants, Local Residents (whether casual or permanent full time workers or retirees), as well potentially provide available dwellings and/or sites and facilities in emergency situations.

A focus on 'community' in the physical and social design would be ideal and recommended in both respects.



Working Group Suggestion

We believe that council- and/or not-for-profit owned relocatable home parks and moveable dwelling sites, plus caravan parks and recreational vehicle sites across the Blackall Range could offer a permanent, temporary and emergency housing solutions toward resolving the Affordable Housing Crisis.

The Working Group would be happy to work with Council to explore potential solutions in this area.

Additional Suggestions

The working group would also like to propose some additional suggestions on existing and future land use, developments as well as building requirements in Maleny and its surrounding Blackall Range based on our expertise and knowledge in the local affordable housing and homelessness space.

1 | Rooming Accommodation

Allow up to 5-unit Rooming Accommodation to be signed off by a certifier.

Current Situation

Other councils, such as Brisbane, Noosa, Bundaberg and the Gold Coast allow existing residential buildings to be retrofitted into rooming accommodation with up to 5-units being signed off by a certifier. Government officials often think that these will attract the 'wrong type of person', but this is often untrue. Women over 55 are a primary interest group for this type of living. We recommend this solution as a reasonably quick way to deal with the housing crisis. It can work here as it has in other LGA's.

Suggestion Outcomes

- Facilitate infill- Larger groups of people can live in areas that are already built. No Koala habitat needs to be bulldozed for this simple change to take place.
- Increase household density - Since the 50's the amount of people living in each house has dramatically dropped. Huge ecological, social and economic outcomes could occur if people retrofitted McMansions to accommodate 5 micro apartments.
- Decreased Loneliness - These dwelling typologies have shared spaces, and there is a high level of community interaction.
- Immediate outcomes - With a flick of the pen this can start

to happen almost immediately (as we know that state governments regulations permit this because BCC does this)

- Perfect for a trial - SCC could trial this - maybe in Blackall range, and monitor.
- Affordable housing - Tackles the affordable housing issue very well.
- Economic advantages - Sharing expenses makes this an economically viable place to live.
- Takes pressure off government social housing, in general, which Maleny has none.

Working Group Suggestion

1. That a residential building can be retrofitted to up to 5 units, class 1a, rooming accommodation with a certifier able to sign off.
2. Incentivise rooming accommodation developments that are not-for-profit and resident-led projects through lower rates.

2 | Affordable Housing Incentives

Provide a voluntary inclusionary housing affordability scheme.

Current Situation

It is our belief that Queensland and the Sunshine Coast can do better and lead the way with an innovative range of workable solutions to Australia's and the Sunshine Coast's Housing Affordability Crisis and more specifically the homelessness crisis being experienced across the Blackall Range. A number of Australian States have already instigated a Voluntary or Mandatory Inclusionary Affordable Housing Scheme or Zoning (VIAHS):

- South Australia set their benchmark at 15% of all new residential development must be Affordable Housing and had achieved 18% as at 2017 [4];
- Victoria is believed to have set their benchmark at 20% [4]
- New South Wales set a benchmark of 5% - Sydney has been operating its Voluntary Affordable Housing Inclusionary Scheme for 20 Years [4].

Land Banking Developers / Property Owners are known to purchase and hold onto larger urban and rural properties awaiting rezoning, taking potential urban land (i.e. previously farm land) and associated dwellings and/or rural farms out of

production. However, this strategy provides no immediate returns to the Investor/Developer despite expended holding costs, with high risk rezoning may not be realised or beyond their 'holding' capacity.

Suggestion Outcomes

- A combination of relevant strategies could benefit owners of larger property holdings by returning a profit on otherwise under-utilised or vacant land, whilst encouraging increased organic farming production; plus provide much needed increased affordable accommodation for urban and rural workers.
- The instigation of an VIAHS via not-for-profit and resident-led development would encourage development of a combination of owner-occupier and/or rental availability of smaller, more affordable dwellings, on smaller urban lots and within collaborative / co-housing communities. All without the need for costly sub-divisions.
- Re/negotiating ownership to be held under a Community Land Trust in perpetuity, would remove it from the property market, significantly increasing housing affordability.

Working Group Suggestion

- Council to negotiate with State Development and/or Federal Government to extend NRAS Tax Benefits/Incentives to new VIAHS program to be piloted on Sunshine Coast.
- Council to encourage all existing and future Property Developers focused on the Sunshine Coast to incorporate the planning, funding and delivery of increased Affordable Housing across the Sunshine Coast as a matter of priority and urgency.
- Council to incentivise Property Developers to:
 - Include property construction and/or retrofitting to a benchmark of 25% to 100% of any commercial or residential development project as 'affordable housing'; or
 - As an alternative - 'Offset' construction and funding for a minimum of 20% of the gross development project as 'affordable housing' that must be delivered as 'Affordable Housing' by a collaborative NFP Offset VIAHS Development Partner or Resident-Lead-Group.
 - Further incentivise NFPs to complete affordable housing development projects.
- All projects to be certified as being publicly marketed, sold and/or leased as 'affordable housing' to be applicable on an ongoing basis, otherwise all Tax Benefits / Incentives would be revoked and refundable to ATO and Council.

- Council to negotiate socially, ecologically and economically responsible 'Offset' arrangements that enable property developers to:
 - Rapidly outsource and fund 20%-100% 'Affordable Housing' of every development project via NFP/ Resident-Lead-Group VIAHS Developers;
 - Gain 'Priority Development Approval' of their development project;
 - Be part of the solution in providing increased affordable housing as a priority.

Our proposed VIAHS could loosely follow NRAS - being a private/public partnership program based on the ATO offering Tax Benefits and Offsets to Property Investors and Developers to provide new residential dwellings as pseudo social housing accommodation at a minimum of 20% below market rental rates for a minimum of 10 years; all managed via private or NFP Real Estate/Property Managers trained and certified as NRAS providers.

Similarly our proposed Sunshine Coast based VIAHS could be instigated as a private/public partnership program offering similar Tax Benefits and an Offset arrangement as encouragement to construct new and/or redevelop existing residential dwelling projects to include 25% to 100% Affordable Housing. Alternatively, a developer could submit a DA to Council for approval to 'Offset' just 20% of the gross development project to a collaborative NFP/Resident-lead-Development Partner that commits to use that funding to deliver 25% to 100% Affordable Housing via their development project.

3 | Housing Design and Construction

Provide incentives for land-owners to build better housing.

Current Situation

We understand that the council has little influence over the type of houses that are built. However, we are in a climate emergency, housing crisis and ramping up to a loneliness epidemic, and so the council should do what they can in this area.

We propose that those who wish to build large housing should be incentivised to refrain from these practices, and in this way can lead to excellent environmental, social, cultural, economic outcomes.

Renters often have little choice but to rent:

1. larger houses than they need;
2. poor-quality housing that costs a lot to heat and cool; and
3. inflexible housing layout and designs.

This has a direct influence on housing affordability and homelessness as the following discussion shows.

Suggestion Outcomes

Smaller houses

Cultural pressure, building practices and the way that the town plan is, leads people to build large houses on small blocks. In fact, Australians build the largest houses in the world, at the same time that our households are getting smaller - in 1911, the average household had 4.5 people, in 2016 it has fallen to just 2.6 people [5,6]. The classic 'Mum, Dad and kids' household has also dropped to just 37% of all households. Building practices are often decades behind social change. The 4 bed/2bath house is still being built as the standard house in the hope that owners can make a profit upon sale, even if they don't need a large house. It's obvious that people outside of family-raising don't need, and not all singles and couples want apartments - some prefer detached houses. Smaller houses are easier to clean, cheaper to build and maintain. Council could incentivise and even run a campaign, to make smaller housing 'cool' again. We understand that there are already building standards, but we are asking to review these and incentivise better buildings.

Flexible Housing

Modern housing building practices are much less flexible than housing of yesteryear. High-set 'Queenslanders' built on larger blocks had a greater capacity to be flexible as accommodation needs change. For example, young independants don't want to live with Mum and/or Dad, but if they live in a 4bed/2bath house, they have no option to either live WITH them or move out. High-set houses can be lifted and

built underneath. Smaller primary houses can fit a secondary dwelling down the back which adds flexibility to our existing housing stock. Flexible design can also be incentivised.

Inefficient Design

Poorly-built housing, in the wrong orientation, is an easy problem to rectify. People build houses to the streets, yet the streets are not oriented towards the sun so to achieve solar passive design it almost impossible. A well designed north-facing passive solar house will cut heating and cooling costs.

Developers and investors have no incentives to build better quality, more efficient homes, especially for rentals. We understand that there are standards in place, but these standards could always be raised. Incentivising, on a council level, to do so would be a small, forward thinking and culturally significant act. .

Protect Natural Assets

The standard way of development is the 'scorched earth' approach. Bulldoze everything so that development companies can make the most money through ease and efficiency. Building around natural assets can encourage builders and planners to build smaller and therefore more affordable houses. Incentives could come from less council fees if the area of land left undeveloped is increased to retain and protect natural assets.

Working Group Suggestion

We propose that Council could incentivise landowners through small changes to their fee structure:

- Building applications don't lapse or be renewable over longer periods. The planning system leans towards those who can afford to build the entire structure at once. Owners could get a pavilion style house approved with a garage that can later be converted into a bedroom approved, and later in time, build it without a new application. Many European countries have this system.
- That council implement an incentive scheme to encourage better quality, smaller housing.

4 | Housing Commodification

Change the culture of housing and recognise it as a basic necessity.

Current Situation

The ultimate problem is that housing is a commodity. An object to trade like stocks and shares. Housing as a “wealth-creation instrument” is breaking the fabric of our society. Housing is a human right. There is no need for an affluent society like ours to have housing problems. We have enough houses. We have between 8-14 million spare bedrooms in Australia any given night. We have hundreds of thousands of empty houses and units in Australia. We have many ‘McMansions’ with 6-10 bedrooms with 1 or 2 people in them. Australians have the largest average size houses in the world. It's currently easier to buy one's fifth house than their first.

Potential Considerations

- We need to decommidfy housing
- Negative gearing must go
- Renters need good quality housing with renewable energy systems.
- We need to retain, improve and promote NRAS.
- It's not healthy for the state government to override local governments for massive, developer-led projects.

- We need more publicly-owned housing (Austria has 60% of their housing stock held as publicly owned housing!). There are other ways to do things, and Australia has one of the more backwards models.
- Community building. While the town plan doesn't mention community, it could be more mindful of how the town plan impacts community. The rise of single-person households is the fastest growing demographic, yet it puts pressure on existing housing stock (one or 2 people in a 4 bedroom house), and increases mental health issues. Humans need each other, and the town plan can better facilitate better human interaction.

5 | First Nations Engagement

Give First Nations more say over land use

Current Situation

The land belongs to First Nations, however adequate engagement and consultation with local Aboriginal Communities are lacking transparency and we would like to see more consultation with First Nations to ensure that they can have more representation and contribution opportunities over land use.

Potential Considerations

We would particularly encourage Council to engage First Nations in expressing their specific challenges and potential solutions to affordable housing.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the Maleny Housing Working Group encourages the consideration of our suggestions for the Blackall Range - Maleny areas including:

- Modifications to zones and codes that will encourage a wider diversity of housing, aimed at creating affordable living options and better use of the limited land resources.
- Implementation of the Affordable Housing Proposal to investigate Council-owned sites to accommodate affordable/ community housing projects within Maleny.
- Investigate ways to directly incentivise development of affordable/community housing projects including investigation of an additional Collaborative Housing typology.
- A combination of relevant strategies that could benefit property owners by returning a profit on otherwise under-utilised or vacant parcels of land.
- The Council to encourage and support Community Land Trusts, held in perpetuity, which inherently increase housing affordability.

We believe that nearly everyone in Maleny has been affected by the lack of affordable housing. It may be for themselves, or their friends or their children. It may be because they currently struggle to live on the wages they earn here, or they may be employers struggling to find staff. Maleny is a community without cheaper suburbs that people could move to. We would like to continue to be a flourishing community, but we will not if we continue down the current trajectory, where many people have to leave.

The Maleny Housing Working Group has brought together many viewpoints and ideas for changing Maleny into a more affordable place to live. Overall we hope that we have encouraged you, our council, to be open to innovative ways of creating a more affordable Maleny.

We are committed to work with the Council in developing workable and preferable replicable solutions to Sunshine Coast's Housing and Homelessness crisis. It's personal. It's our business. It's time.



Sources

- [1]: <https://www.realestate.com.au/insights/proptrack-home-price-index-march-2022/>
- [2]: <https://www.afr.com/property/residential/queensland-s-rental-crisis-set-to-persist-20210525-p57utu%23~:text=3DIn%2520the%2520past%252012%2520months%252C%2520asking%2520rents%2520for%2520a%2520house,data%2520from%2520SQM%2520Research%2520shows&sa=D&source=docs&ust=1652313079449342&usg=AOvVaw0nHcesrUsaRBzbYHjS4KpK>
- [3]: Local community source from direct conversations with 3 of the families, 2021
- [4]: https://www.ahuri.edu.au/sites/default/files/migration/documents/AHURI_Final_Report_No297_Supporting_affordable_housing_supply_inclusionary_planning_in_new_and_renewing_communities.pdf
- [5]: <https://www.domain.com.au/news/australian-house-sizes-are-increasing-led-by-the-act-commsec-report-1003533/>
- [6]: <https://aifs.gov.au/facts-and-figures/population-and-households>

Acknowledgement of Country

The Maleny Housing Working Group acknowledges the past, present and future Traditional Custodians and Elders of the Jinibara and Gubbi Gubbi nations where our contributors and organisations are based throughout the Sunshine Coast.

We pay our respects to the continuation of their cultural and spiritual connection to Country.