



Submission to Eurobodalla Shire Council
Draft Housing Strategy

Labor for Eurobodalla

Summary

A Labor Council will pursue a more proactive role to deliver more diverse housing choices and affordable housing for the residents of Eurobodalla, as outlined in this submission. Labor will

- Commit to an *Affordable* Housing Strategy for the Eurobodalla
- Actively Advocate for an *increase in social housing*
- Reform Planning to *facilitate housing types* to meet the needs of all residents
- Provide incentives to increase the number of houses for *long term* rental
- Facilitate *Joint Housing Options*
- Pursue Partnerships to *provide housing on council land*
- Work with the State Government to *identify state land for social housing*.

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Mayoral Candidate

(on behalf of Labor for Eurobodalla)

Foreword

I am lodging this submission on behalf of the Labor candidates for the forthcoming Eurobodalla Shire Council election.

Responsibility for housing policy is divided between all levels of government – national, state, and local.

We welcome the fact that Council has released a Draft Housing Strategy for comment.

We are disappointed that the proposed strategies for dealing with housing diversity and affordability are so limited in scope.

The *Local Housing Strategy Background Report* produced by Council in November 2023 identifies the main issues with housing in the Eurobodalla as the relative lack of housing diversity and the significant shortage of affordable (including social) housing.

These problems do not begin at Durras and end at Wallaga Lake – they extend down the coast from south of Wollongong to the Victorian border.

The Shoalhaven City Council and the Bega Valley Shire Council have both released *Affordable Housing Strategies*. It is time for Eurobodalla to join them.

The approaches to improving housing affordability set out in the Draft Housing Strategy effectively involve supporting market provision – even though the Background Report found that “80% of identified affordable housing need is unlikely to be met through the market”.

In our view Council needs to adopt a far more proactive role in delivering affordable housing than that envisaged in the Draft Housing Strategy.

In this submission we set put forward some proposals for what Council might do – based on the successful strategies from the Shoalhaven and Bega Valley.

Background

The Eurobodalla Shire Council is seeking public comment by 10 July on a [Draft Housing Strategy](#).

As part of the development of the strategy, Council commissioned a background report from Judith Stubbs and Associates (JSA), completed in November 2023. JSA also produced background reports for Bega and Shoalhaven Councils.

Following a review of the current situation, that [report](#) concluded:

“Two critical issues arise from the evidence base. These are the relative lack of housing diversity to meet current and projected housing need; and the significant shortage of affordable (including social) housing to meet the growing need [from] very low and low income renters in particular, many of whom are in essential service jobs and would not be eligible for social housing.”

It identified a number of strategic priorities:

- increasing the supply of smaller strata dwellings in the key centres of Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma, particularly in lower value and non-premium (non-waterfront) localities
- developing small lot, entry level project homes and smaller villas in lower cost release areas such as Moruya, as well as across the LGA more generally
- seeking to ensure that at least 60% of new dwellings are provided as well-located strata dwellings in Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma, and close to the Batemans Bay Strategic Cluster.

However, the report went on to note that:

“It is also important that around 80% of identified affordable housing need is unlike to be met through market, and would require strong planning intervention and/or direct funding or substantial subsidies to be affordable to most of the statutory target groups”.

Council’s proposal

The Draft Housing Strategy identifies three actions to improve housing affordability:

“Council will monitor changes to the low-income demographic impacted within the Eurobodalla by housing scarcity and engage with providers on ways to respond. Where these responses include increasing temporary, seasonal, and emergency shelter capacity, Council will facilitate planning process improvements and changes.

Council will facilitate community, provider, and agency advocacy to highlight the need for access to housing support and collaboration efforts, and to focus the NSW Government's efforts on the Eurobodalla Shire.

Develop a contributions policy to link affordable housing supply to large subdivisions and multi-unit developments and requests for rezoning. A focus will be on identifying sites suitable for affordable housing opportunities and higher density unit developments in commercial centres to provide a social or affordable housing component. The policy may provide for Voluntary Planning Agreements rather than financial contributions.”

In our view these proposed actions are important, but will not deal with the problem of lack of housing diversity and affordable/social housing.

Labor’s alternative

Labor believes that Council should produce and implement an *Affordable Housing Strategy*, based on the model adopted two years ago by the Bega Valley Shire Council *as a response to the same problems facing Eurobodalla*.

While the detail of the strategy will need to be developed through a further design process, it should include the following elements.

A commitment to the strategy

Council should formally adopt the strategy, including five- and ten-year targets, and a set of performance indicators to measure progress towards the targets.

Council should report annually against the performance indicators, and set out remedial measures to address areas of underperformance.

It should also commit to updating the background report after five years, and adjusting the strategy if required to address emerging issues.

Council should also allocate staffing resources to support the strategy, and provide advice to developers, community housing providers, and other potential partners.

Advocacy

At a high level, Council should use every opportunity to engage with the State Government to advocate for increased investment in social housing in the Shire.

The State Budget [allocated \\$6.6 billion](#) for social housing, and it is important that the Eurobodalla receives a share of this expenditure, given the low level of social housing relative to other areas.

Council should work with government departments and agencies to identify unused or underutilised publicly owned buildings available for use as temporary/crisis, transitional and/or longer-term accommodation. It should also identify publicly owned land which could be used for the development of affordable manufactured home estates managed by a community housing provider or other not-for-profit organisation (CHP/NFP).

Council should work with the private sector to support the use of caravan parks for crisis and long-term accommodation, and with the community sector to develop crisis and short-term care options in community centres or church halls.

Planning reform

Council should review and amend planning controls and processes to:

- Remove barriers to use of tiny homes and manufactured homes.
- Increase the supply of smaller strata dwellings in accessible areas.
- Undertake “fast track” processing for developments by private, public and/or community sector/NFP proponents that involve affordable housing in the form of build-to-rent dwellings to be managed by a CHP/NFP.
- Encourage private sector investment in new caravan parks and manufactured home estates, contingent on delivery of affordable housing as part of the development.
- Impose conditions on approvals of secondary housing to prevent use as short term rental accommodation.
- Require all shop-top housing and apartment buildings in or near the town centres of Batemans Bay, Moruya and Narooma to include at least 20 per cent small one- and two-bedroom dwellings.

Support for the permanent rental market

There are many dwellings in the Shire used as holiday homes, and many of these are left empty for extended periods. Council should encourage homeowners to make these available for long-term rental by providing discounts on or exemptions from Council charges.

Joint housing options

There are many elderly people (both couples and singles) across the Shire living in dwellings with underutilised space, which in some cases they find hard to maintain. Council should work with a community housing provider or another not-for-profit body to develop a scheme to match these people with suitable tenants or lodgers, including people at risk of homelessness and key workers.

It should also support the development of New Generation Boarding Houses to be managed by a CHP/NFP.

Provision through partnership

Council should identify sites it owns that can be made available for affordable housing. Sites should be well-located in terms of access to services and transport.

Developments should include a caravan park or MHE, as well as multi-tenure developments including New Generation Boarding House, studio apartments and small one- or two-bedroom apartments available at affordable rents, or affordable to purchase by low-income people using shared equity arrangements.

Council should enter into partnerships with CHP/NFP providers selected through a competitive process to deliver these developments.

Agreements with providers should specify the dwelling type and tenure mix, risk apportionment, and long-term management and maintenance arrangements.