



a fairer victoria achievements so far

**Strategy Seven** Boosting access to affordable housing

# strategy seven

## Boosting access to affordable housing

### Aim

With record population growth and shrinking household sizes causing a greater demand for housing in Victoria and driving up prices, low income households find it more difficult to meet their housing costs. Although the actions needed to make housing more affordable are shared with the Federal Government, A Fairer Victoria has made unprecedented investments to address this key issue for Victorians, including a planned \$500 million investment in public and social housing from 2007/08 to 2010/11. The impacts of this investment will be seen in future years.

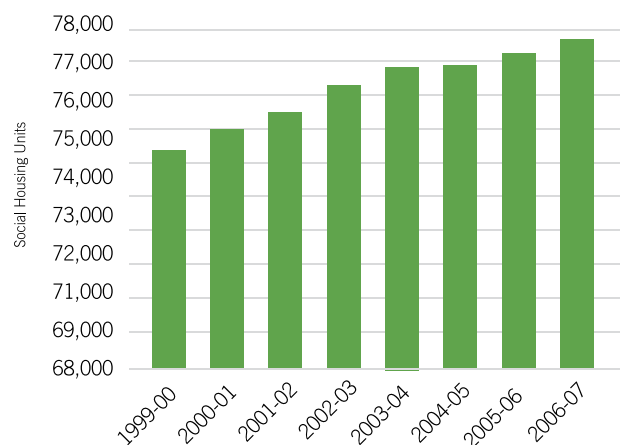
### Increased social housing

Creating housing opportunities for low-income Victorians reduces barriers to employment, education and participation in the workforce. This is particularly important when many Victorian families face increasing costs of home ownership and private rental. Since 2005, extensive Government investment in social housing has created growth in social housing stock and improvements in the quality of housing stock. Development of the housing association sector is a key vehicle to drive the provision of affordable housing. We have also increased investment in public housing.

As a result of such initiatives, we have already seen:

- around 2,000 new homes provided to low-income Victorians since 2005/06
- 2,933 existing properties receiving a major facelift in the two years since July 2005, to make them better living environments
- 7,608 more households assisted with short-term and long-term housing over two years, with 75,932 households assisted at 30 June 2007
- a reduction of 1,266 households on the public housing waiting list in the two years to June 2007, from 35,416 households to 34,150, and
- a further 14,733 households allocated public housing in the two years to June 2007.

Social housing growth





*Award winning K2 Apartments in Windsor, Australia's most environmentally sustainable public housing.*

As part of the *Strategy for Growth in Housing for Low-Income Victorians* and *Building More Homes Together*, we are increasing the number of well-governed, managed and viable housing associations. Initiatives include helping fund 599 properties in 2005/06 to 2006/07 through partnerships with non-government organisations.

### **Additional support for homeless Victorians**

Since 1998/99, annual funding for the *Supported Accommodation Assistance Program* (SAAP) in Victoria has increased by 85 per cent. Victoria now provides more accommodation for homeless people under SAAP than any other state in Australia. These commitments are bringing results, with nine per cent of homeless people now sleeping rough in Victoria - much lower than the national average of 14 per cent.

The Victorian Government has allocated \$45.3 million for other (non-SAAP) homelessness assistance programs, such as:

- transitional housing
- flexible funding to help over 44,000 households access private rental and emergency accommodation every year, and
- capital grant funding to develop youth refuge-style accommodation linked with onsite support as part of the *Support for Young People That Really Counts* program.

Since the launch of A Fairer Victoria in 2005, we have introduced a number of other initiatives to improve our response to homelessness.

*Creating Connections* is the Government's blueprint for a reformed homelessness service for these young people, launched in October 2006. It brings together the Commonwealth and State governments to provide the personalised support that homeless young people need to rebuild their lives and move on to more independent housing.

In 2006/07, we provided \$4.2 million through *Creating Connections* to develop youth transitions hubs across metropolitan and regional Victoria. These hubs link young people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, to a range of connected services such as life skills training, private rental support, intensive case management, family reconciliation services, and access to education, employment and training.

In this way, young people get the assistance they need, without having to tell their story again and again to many different people.

As a result of these and other initiatives, we have:

- helped more than 11,000 young people access Victorian homelessness services in 2006/07, and
- increased the total number of households provided with homelessness assistance by 2,412, from 79,400 in 2004/05 to 81,812 in 2005/06.

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Authorised by Peter Batchelor,  
1 Spring Street, Melbourne VIC 3000.

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