



Housing Affordability & Food Security

Request of Government

We are seeking

- Targeted and ongoing investment in community agencies is needed to strengthen access to affordable housing and improve food security outcomes for vulnerable communities.
- Housing and planning reforms to protect existing neighbourhoods and encourage new developments.



Background

Access to Housing

Access to secure and affordable housing for people in need must be strengthened through targeted investment and reform. Increased funding for the 'Housing First' initiative is essential, as it prioritises immediate access to stable housing followed by tailored, wraparound support services that address health, employment, and social needs.

Alongside this, there must be a sustained increase in the supply of public housing, as well as significant upgrades to existing properties to ensure they are safe, accessible, and fit for purpose.

Finally, assistance provided to low income households in the private rental market should be comprehensively reviewed to ensure it remains adequate, responsive to rising living costs, and effective in preventing housing stress and homelessness.

Food Security

Food security organisations in Knox that provide critical emergency relief require increased and sustained funding to meet growing community need. Services such as Knox Infolink, Boronia Foothills Community Care (Ferntree Gully), and TLC Support Inc (serving Knox and Maroondah) deliver essential support including food parcels, fresh produce, and prepared meals to households experiencing financial hardship, often through appointment based, locally targeted assistance.

Outer East Food Share plays a vital coordinating role by linking food rescue organisations with local emergency food relief services across Melbourne's Outer East. While the Victorian Government announced a funding package in the 2025/26 budget, this has yet to translate into tangible outcomes for organisations on the ground in Knox.

To address immediate cost of living pressures facing families, additional grants and direct funding are urgently needed to ensure these frontline services can remain responsive, reliable, and adequately resourced.

Planning Reforms

Significant planning reforms are fundamentally reshaping the Victorian planning system, increasingly sidelining local government from key planning decisions, particularly for major applications, without providing the necessary support or funding to adapt to the new framework.

Knox was set a government target of 43,000 additional dwellings by 2051 and has since been advised that it is now considered to have sufficient housing capacity. However, the housing crisis extends well beyond planning controls, with major contributing factors including labour shortages, high interest rates, inflation, the taxation regime, escalating construction costs, and ongoing material supply issues.

Knox has consistently demonstrated that it issues more than enough planning permits to enable housing growth, yet many of these approvals are not being acted upon. Collectively, these reforms are permanently altering the look and feel of local suburbs and have significantly diminished important neighbourhood character considerations and protections.

Our proposed solution

Housing & Food Security

Increased, ongoing and indexed State Government funding to local food security organisations, including targeted, place-based grants, to ensure services in Knox can meet rising demand and respond to cost-of-living pressures.

Planning Reforms

1. Reinstate local council oversight to address concerns over the loss of valued neighbourhood character and tree canopy in established areas.
2. Identify suitable State-owned land and streamline planning and building regulations to enable private and not-for-profit providers to rapidly deliver cost-effective affordable housing using modern construction methods.
3. Align regulatory and other policies to encourage new housing in activity centres and transport routes, including incentives for social and affordable housing and abolishing the windfall gains tax when Council land is rezoned.

Project contacts

Judy Chalkley
Director Connected Communities
9298 8298

Jonathan McNally
Director City Liveability
9298 8102

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TO OTHER LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT**

