

**Submission to the Draft Housing Action Plan 2026**  
**Committee for Greater Hobart**  
**March 2026**

**Introduction**

The Committee for Greater Hobart (CfGH) welcomes the opportunity to provide feedback on the Draft Housing Action Plan 2026.

Housing availability and affordability are among the most significant challenges facing Greater Hobart. They are central to the region's long-term economic resilience, social cohesion and liveability.

CfGH supports the City of Hobart's recognition that addressing housing supply requires a more proactive and coordinated approach. However, the challenge should not be viewed simply as a matter of planning controls or individual projects.

Housing delivery is fundamentally a systems challenge, where planning frameworks, infrastructure provision, financing models, land assembly, community confidence and market feasibility all interact. Importantly, housing policy must aim not only to deliver more homes, but to create places where people want to live.

Cities that succeed are those that combine housing with amenity, vibrancy and opportunity: places that are active, safe, inclusive and connected. These qualities are critical to attracting and retaining residents, supporting downsizing, improving affordability outcomes and strengthening long-term economic resilience.

**Housing delivery is a systems challenge**

The barriers to housing supply cannot be attributed to any single issue, but the combined effect of multiple costs, risks and delays across the development process. Through its work with industry, government and financial stakeholders, CfGH has been examining the cost stack of development across Greater Hobart.

This is reinforced by work from the *Centre for International Economics* that was referred to by Ellen Witte from SGS Economics in the 2024 Housing Forum, which found that the cost of delivering mid-rise apartments in NSW increased significantly between 2018 and 2023, and that many projects were not financially feasible, with delivery costs exceeding achievable sale prices (The Centre for International Economics 2024).

While Greater Hobart is a different market to Sydney, the broader lesson is directly applicable: housing feasibility is shaped by the interaction of multiple cost drivers, not planning alone, including:

- planning processes and approval timeframes
- infrastructure provision and servicing costs
- land assembly and feasibility
- financing costs and risk premiums
- regulatory requirements
- construction costs and labour availability
- market absorption risk

In a smaller and shallower market like Greater Hobart, these pressures are often more acute, with less capacity to absorb delays, uncertainty or cost escalation. Individually manageable, collectively these factors can prevent otherwise viable projects from proceeding.

### **The importance of a regional perspective**

Housing markets operate at a regional scale, not within individual municipal boundaries. Greater Hobart functions as a single housing and labour market spanning Hobart, Glenorchy, Clarence, Kingborough, Derwent Valley, Huon Valley, Brighton and Sorell. Decisions in one municipality inevitably affect outcomes in others.

This is particularly relevant where transport corridors, activity centres and renewal precincts span municipal boundaries, reinforcing the need for coordination beyond individual council areas. It is therefore positive to see the emphasis in the Draft Housing Action Plan on strategic land use planning, including alignment with broader regional frameworks.

Through its work on the review of the Southern Tasmanian Regional Land Use Strategy (STRLUS), including stakeholder engagement, a dedicated Livability Forum and formal submissions, CfGH has consistently emphasised the importance of a clear and coordinated regional planning framework.

A key message from this work is that regional planning must move beyond simply identifying land supply. It must provide clear direction on where growth should occur, how it should be sequenced, and how it aligns with infrastructure, transport and activity centres.

In this context, STRLUS plays a critical role in:

- aligning housing growth with transport corridors and existing centres
- identifying priority locations for infill and renewal
- supporting more efficient infrastructure planning and investment
- reducing fragmentation across municipal boundaries

Importantly, regional planning also provides the mechanism to translate broader objectives, including livability, wellbeing, creativity and vibrancy, into clear spatial

outcomes, rather than leaving them as high-level aspirations.

Without a strong regional framework, there is a risk that:

- housing is delivered in locations disconnected from services and infrastructure
- investment is fragmented or poorly sequenced
- councils are left to address region-wide challenges in isolation

Conversely, a clear and aligned regional framework provides a more stable foundation for:

- coordinated decision-making across jurisdictions
- more efficient infrastructure and service provision
- greater confidence for investment and delivery

For this reason, it is important that the Draft Housing Action Plan continues to align with and support the STRLUS process, recognising that local housing outcomes are ultimately shaped by regional planning decisions.

### **Certainty and timeliness in decision-making**

Time is one of the most critical elements of housing feasibility. Delays in approvals, uncertainty about requirements, and extended holding costs increase risk and reduce the likelihood that projects proceed.

Improving certainty begins with better front-end clarity. Structured pre-application processes, including the proposed concierge approach in the Action Plan, may:

- clarify information requirements upfront
- identify key issues early
- align expectations prior to lodgement

This should translate into reduced reliance on Requests for Information (RFIs), which are a common source of delay.

While the Tasmanian planning system is generally strong and functions well when adequately resourced, there is an opportunity to improve how it operates in practice.

The Resource Management and Planning System (RMPS) was nationally leading when introduced and remains fundamentally sound. However, over time, incremental change and inconsistent application have introduced complexity and areas of ambiguity.

There is an opportunity to reaffirm and modernise the RMPS framework, ensuring it reflects contemporary challenges including climate risk, technological change and

evolving community expectations.

In addition, there is value in trialling more innovative approaches, such as a “DA-in-a-Day Hack” exercise, bringing together all relevant council functions and stakeholders to test more coordinated and efficient assessment pathways.

Such approaches can:

- identify inefficiencies and duplication
- enable more parallel assessment processes
- build shared understanding across teams
- support a stronger delivery culture

### **The importance of clear and enforceable policy**

Unclear or non-statutory policy creates ambiguity, extended timeframes and inconsistent outcomes. In the Tasmanian context, the RMPS, Tasmanian Planning Policies (TPPs), regional strategies and local planning schemes should operate as a clear and coherent hierarchy.

For this system to function effectively:

- key policy settings must be embedded in statutory instruments
- guidance material should support, not substitute, policy
- expectations must be clearly articulated and consistently applied

Strong and enforceable policy provides:

- certainty for developers and investors
- reduced need for extended negotiation
- consistent and transparent decision-making
- greater community confidence

There is an important role for councils in clearly articulating local character and place outcomes, ensuring that growth and renewal are delivered in ways that respond to context and community expectations. Ultimately, clarity reduces noise in the system and supports delivery.

### **Enabling private capital to land well**

The scale of the housing challenge means that private capital must play a central role. In the current fiscal environment, there is limited capacity for government to fund housing delivery at scale. The focus must therefore be on enabling private capital to land well. Capital will only invest where projects are:

- feasible
- risks are understood and manageable
- delivery pathways are clear

At present, many projects face a risk-return mismatch, particularly in a smaller market like Greater Hobart. Enabling capital requires:

- clarity and certainty in planning and approvals
- reduced early-stage risk
- coordinated infrastructure and servicing
- strong precedent through exemplar projects

Targeted derisking mechanisms and patient capital approaches can play a role, particularly in early-stage or precinct-scale projects. The objective is not to replace private capital, but to create the conditions in which it can invest with confidence. The Committee is currently exploring models that may help derisk and give greater confidence to private and public capital to unlock renewal and infill in Greater Hobart and is happy to brief the City of Hobart further on this project as it progresses.

### **The importance of place marketing and investment attraction**

Planning reform alone does not deliver housing, there is a need to translate planning frameworks into clear, investable opportunities. For many investors, planning systems are complex and difficult to interpret. Without clear communication and active engagement, opportunities may not convert into delivery. This requires:

- clear articulation of priority precincts
- simplified communication of development potential
- active engagement with developers and financiers
- positioning places as opportunities, not constraints

This is effectively place-based business development and is critical to unlocking investment. Examples of this approach can be seen elsewhere, such as Prospect in SA.

### **Renewal, productivity and opportunity**

Urban renewal and density is not only a housing strategy, but it is also an economic one. As Andrew Leigh MP has noted, increased density is associated with improved productivity through proximity and access to opportunity (Leigh 2025).

It is encouraging to see reference in the Draft Housing Action Plan to South Australia's ARCHI program, which demonstrates how design-led approaches can improve the quality, acceptance and market appeal of medium-density development.

The focus on underutilised land is also welcome. There is a clear opportunity to

undertake a coordinated audit across all land tenures, building on previous work including:

- the Northern Corridor project
- the Hobart City Deal
- analysis of underutilised car parking undertaken by Cedric Hodges from Deloitte

The priority now is to move from analysis to action, identifying a small number of high-potential sites that:

- provide sufficient scale
- are well connected to services and infrastructure
- support mixed-use and activated outcomes
- have the highest likelihood of success as exemplar precincts

In smaller markets, visible success is critical and well-executed projects can help build confidence, normalise density, and unlock further investment.

#### **Exemplar opportunity: St John's Park, New Town**

These sites underpin the opportunity to deliver exemplar precincts and are critical in building market and financial confidence. St John's Park represents a strong opportunity, offering:

- scale
- proximity to amenity, services and infrastructure
- strong community connections
- anchor projects for the precinct centered around health care
- public land ownership enabling patient and staged delivery

Further, its connection to the Moonah corridor highlights the importance of integrated, corridor-based renewal.

The Bowden redevelopment delivered by Renewal SA as highlighted in the Action Plan, demonstrates how coordinated governance and place-making can deliver successful large-scale renewal (Renewal SA 2025).

Similarly, projects delivered by Nightingale Housing demonstrate strong demand for well-designed medium-density housing (Nightingale Housing 2026).

With the right governance, policy settings and derisking, exemplar projects like St John's Park can reduce perceived risk and unlock a broader pipeline of development.

#### **Climate resilience and insurability**

Housing policy must also respond to climate risk and long-term insurability. The Climate Change Authority's *Home Safe* report highlights increasing exposure to climate-related risks, with implications for cost, insurance and long-term viability (Climate Change Authority 2025).

This is reinforced by global reinsurers, who point to increasing losses and pressure on insurance affordability (Munich Re 2026; Swiss Re 2025).

For Greater Hobart, this requires:

- directing growth to resilient locations
- integrating climate adaptation into planning and design
- considering long-term insurability as part of feasibility

While it is noted that the Action Plan identifies climate and elements of resilience, given the significant issues of insurability and affordability these issues need further consideration in the context of the shaping of opportunities for housing and place development in Hobart.

### **Governance and delivery capability**

Delivering housing at scale requires strong governance and delivery capability. The experience of Renewal SA highlights the importance of:

- clear mandates
- capability, skills and expertise in precinct scale master planning
- coordinated delivery
- long-term institutional focus

This is particularly relevant for precinct-scale opportunities such as St John's Park.

### **The importance of amenity, vibrancy and place investment**

Investment in amenity is core to feasibility and long-term value. While short-term incentives such as rate rebates can play a role, they typically address only a small portion of the feasibility challenge. By contrast, investment in amenity and activation can:

- enhance land and asset value
- improve demand and absorption
- strengthen investor confidence
- deliver ongoing value over the life of the asset

In this sense, amenity provides a more bankable uplift than some other measures such as rate rebates or other short-term incentives.

## Conclusion

Housing supply will not be solved by any single reform or policy intervention. It requires a coordinated, system-wide approach across planning, infrastructure, finance, governance and delivery, grounded in a clear understanding of how projects are actually brought to life.

Importantly, it requires a clear vision of what success looks like, as this is not simply about delivering more dwellings. It is about delivering renewal and creating places that are vibrant, inclusive, connected and full of life. Places that attract and retain people; support community, creativity and economic participation; and where people can see themselves living.

It is critical that principles of inclusion, social cohesion and connection are embedded across all aspects of planning, design and delivery. At the same time, there must be a stronger focus on the fundamentals that enable projects to proceed.

This includes:

- certainty of process, with clear, timely and predictable pathways to approval
- reduced politicisation of decision-making, particularly for strategically important projects
- strong, enforceable policy frameworks that provide clarity rather than ambiguity
- long-term investment in amenity, infrastructure and place quality, recognising these as core enablers of value and feasibility

Together, these elements can create the conditions for delivery, not just intent.

A central challenge, especially given the national race for capital, global uncertainties, increasing costs and our small market, is how Greater Hobart can more effectively crowd in private capital.

This requires moving beyond a traditional government mindset, to one where our community is a credible, capable and consistent partner, not only with the philanthropy, impact and private sectors, but also with the Australian Government.

A clear pipeline of investable projects, supported by strong governance, coordinated infrastructure and policy certainty, positions Greater Hobart as a more effective counterpart in securing national investment and support.

Equally important is how the system engages with the full cross-section of stakeholders who ultimately deliver housing and places. This includes:

- developers and landowners

- financiers and investors
- designers, planners and builders
- community organisations and residents

There is an opportunity to move toward a more collaborative, co-design approach, where these groups are engaged early and meaningfully in shaping solutions, not simply responding to them. Done well, this may:

- improve feasibility and deliverability
- build broader community understanding and support
- unlock more innovative and place-responsive outcomes

Ultimately, the challenge is not just to plan for growth, but to create the conditions in which great places can be delivered. Greater Hobart has a significant opportunity to do this well through a focused approach to renewal, a commitment to quality and vibrancy, and a clear emphasis on delivery.

Hobart may be able to move beyond incremental change and begin to unlock the full potential of our city if we can address:

- strong and clear policy
- certainty and timeliness in process
- coordinated regional planning
- investment in amenity and place
- and a deliberate strategy to attract and partner with capital

The Committee for Greater Hobart is keen to continue to work collaboratively with the City of Hobart, State Government, industry and the community to help convene conversations, share insights and solve problems that unlock these opportunities. Our role is to connect, to bring together diverse perspectives, and to support practical, evidence-based approaches that move from strategy to delivery and we look forward to discussing this further with the City of Hobart.

## References

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