Local Housing Action Plan
Gladstone Regional Council

Queensland Government

GLADSTONE REGIONAL COUNCIL

Acknowledgement of Country

Gladstone Regional Council would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land, the Bailai, the Gurang, the Gooreng Gooreng and the Taribelang Bunda people.

We pay respect to their Elders past, present and emerging.

Gladstone Regional Council is committed to cultivating a culture of inclusion and connectedness, acknowledging that our communities are richer when diversity is embraced.

Contents

1.0 Introduction

This Local Housing Action Plan (the Plan) is developed through a joint initiative involving the Queensland Government, Gladstone Regional Council, and the Local Government Association of Queensland (LGAQ), to respond to a range of immediate, emerging, and longer-term housing challenges in the Gladstone region.

This is an iterative process that does not intend to duplicate existing actions of Council or the Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027, or the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025. It seeks to identify opportunities, consider an agreed response, develop targeted actions on key priorities and enable ongoing review of effort to adapt and respond to changing needs.

In development of this Plan, Gladstone Regional Council engaged and sought input from the Gladstone Housing Round Table group, stood up by Gladstone Region Engaging in Action Together, internal and community stakeholders.

The Plan aims to:

1. **develop agreed priority actions** to respond to the housing need in the local government area

2. **establish strong foundations for longer-term housing responses** to assist housing and homelessness outcomes in the local government area into the future

3. **incorporate existing information and plans** that assist with developing responses to housing need and acknowledge work already completed by Council, state agencies, private and not-for-profit organisations

4. **facilitate targeted interaction between all parties through agreed actions** to ensure a focus on deliverables and projects that can improve housing responses in the short and longer-term.

2.0 Approach and Methodology

The plan provides an overview of key community and housing characteristics, and emerging issues related to housing in the community, and identifies an initial set of priority actions to respond to housing need. It has been developed through a review of a range of supporting documentation including:

- Regional infrastructure plans
- Council's planning scheme
- Relevant Council strategies, reports and plans
- Statistical data from the Queensland Government Statisticians Office, including Census and other data sets such as building approvals, rental market data and housing approvals
- Housing needs data from the Department of Housing and other state agencies as required
- The Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027 and the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025
- Other local data and information such as Regional Australia Institute reports.

3.0 The Gladstone Region

From Kroombit Tops in the west to the coral lagoons of the Southern Great Barrier Reef, the Gladstone Region's landscape is as varied as it is beautiful. The Gladstone region is situated on the traditional lands of the Bailai, Gurang, Gooreng Gooreng, and Taribelang Bunda peoples, located approximately 500km, or six and a half hours' drive north of Brisbane City, with a population of 65,431 people and a total land area of 10,484 square kilometres.

The city of Gladstone, the areas of Boyne Island and Tannum Sands, and the town of Calliope are the main population centres in the region with 56,000 people living in these localities. Nearly 8,000 people live in smaller communities in the region such as Miriam Vale, Baffle Creek, Deepwater and the beachside localities of Seventeen Seventy and Agnes Water, according to the 2021 Census.

The Gladstone Region features plenty of green open space, including the nationally-recognised Gladstone Tondoon Botanic Gardens, award-winning playgrounds, and coastal locations where sailing and boating activities are popular. Residents and visitors can see historical sites, go bush walking, mountain climbing or snorkel the reef to experience the outdoor environment. The region's strength is a great sense of community with a 'can-do' attitude.

The Gladstone Region has a Gross Regional Product (GRP) of $5.9 billion with just over 3,900 local businesses and nearly 28,000 regional jobs, with about 15 per cent of these coming from manufacturing. 20.6% of the Gladstone Region workforce are technicians or trades workers. The region has a strong record of job creation and investment opportunities, with relaxed living, recreational and tourism options enhancing its liveability and potential for future growth. In recent decades, the economy has been built around heavy industry with access to a deep water harbour for import and export trade.

Several renewable energy projects, including hydrogen, biofuels, solar energy, and new waste management practices have been proposed for the Gladstone State Development Area. If they proceed, they position the city of Gladstone as a renewable energy hub, taking the economy in an exciting new direction.

https://www.gladstone.qld.gov.au/demographics

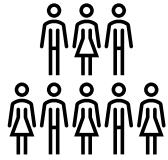# 4.0 Gladstone Region Challenges and Opportunities

The challenges and opportunities facing the Gladstone Region are as diverse as our beautiful landscapes and resilient communities. From our regional locality to our industrial history, the region is no stranger to working together for better outcomes. Broader challenges impacting the Gladstone Region include:

- Transport Challenges
    - In and out of the region - limited airline carriers and excessive costs.
    - Around the region - limited public transport options.
- Health Service Challenges
    - High wait times and costs.
    - Imposed travel outside of the region.
    - Limited access to General Practitioners (GPs), specialists, mental health services, allied health clinicians and bulk-billed providers.
    - Insufficient infrastructure.
- Transitioning Economy Opportunities
    - Gladstone has been identified as a Hydrogen Hub to support the transition to renewable energy.
    - The region has experienced the housing impacts of a 'boom and bust' cycle in the past.
- Postcode Prejudice
    - The Gladstone Region, like other regional areas across the state, anecdotally faces higher insurance costs and location-related difficulty securing finance.
- Difficult business perceptions
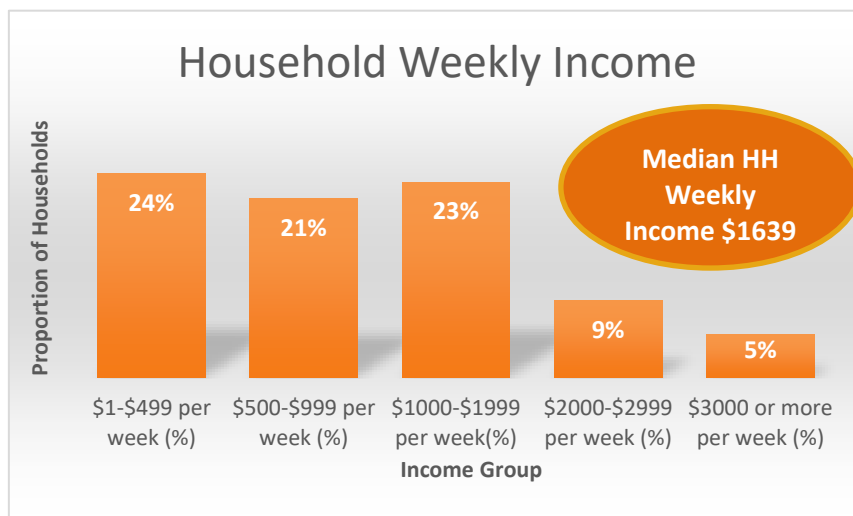   - There is a perception that it is difficult and expensive to do business in Gladstone.

In late 2023, Gladstone Region Engaging in Action Together stood up a Housing Round Table group which sees all three tiers of government working together, with other stakeholders, to address the housing challenges in the region.

5.0 Key Demographic Characteristics

Population Characteristics

Current population 65,431
Projected to grow to 75,753 by 2041 (0.8% annually)

Age

Age Group	No. of Persons (Thousands)
0-14	14
15-24	7
25-44	17
45-64	18
65+	9
Total Population	65

Median Age 38.2

Household Weekly Income

Income Group	Proportion of Households
$1-$499 per week (%)	24%
$500-$999 per week (%)	21%
$1000-$1999 per week(%)	23%
$2000-$2999 per week (%)	9%
$3000 or more per week (%)	5%

Median HH Weekly Income $1639
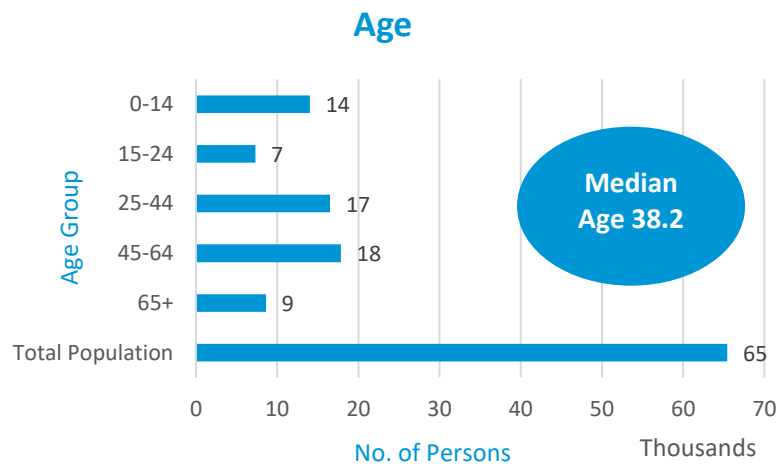
Family Composition

- Couple with children: 42%
- Couple no children: 41%
- One parent: 17%
- Others: 1%
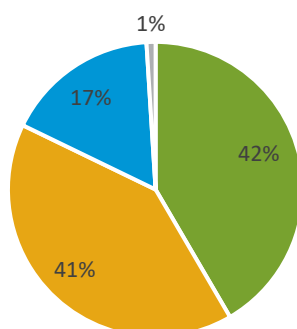
Legend: ■ Couple with children (%) ■ Couple no children (%) ■ One parent (%) ■ Others (%)

Household Composition

- One Family: 71%
- Lone person: 26%
- Group: 3%
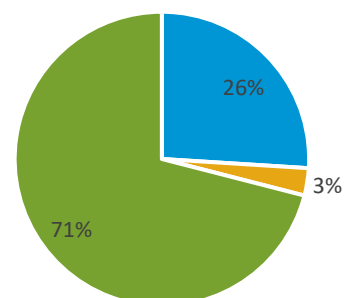
Legend: ■ Lone person (%) ■ Group (%) ■ One Family (%)

6.0 Key Housing Characteristics

The Gladstone Region has a number of master planned subdivisions with approval in place for future residential land release: Vantage Estate in Kirkwood, Riverstone Rise in Boyne Island, Little Creek in Kirkwood, Forest Springs in Kirkwood and The Sands in Tannum Sands.

Residential Sales

Median Sale Price $390,000

Type	No. of Sales
Detached Dwellings	1828
Attached Dwellings	441
Vacant Land	182
New Houses	35

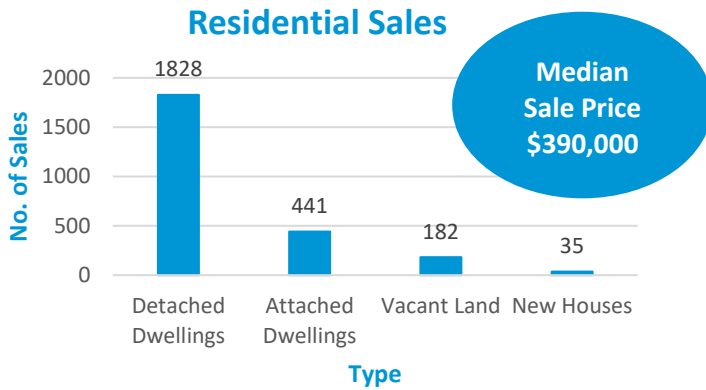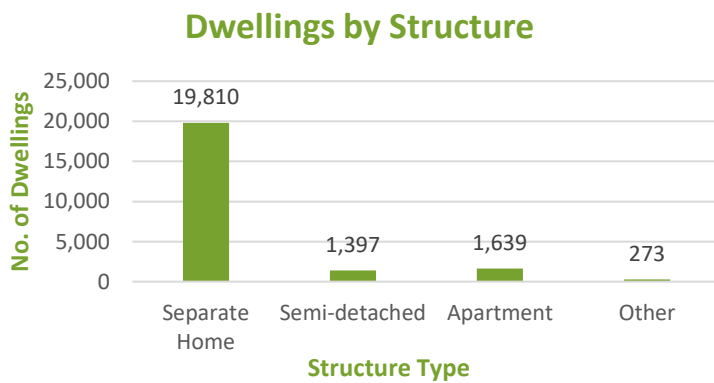## Dwellings by Structure

Structure Type	No. of Dwellings
Separate Home	19,810
Semi-detached	1,397
Apartment	1,639
Other	273

Median Rental Price (per week)

Tenure Type	Price per week
4 bedroom house	$460
3 bedroom house	$390
2 bedroom flat/unit	$295
1 bedroom flat/unit	$240

Ownership Breakdown

- Fully Owned (%) — 27%
- Owned with Mortgage (%) — 38%
- Rented (%) — 34%
- Other (%) — 1%

883
Social housing tenancies in the Gladstone Region 883 (as at 30/06/2020)

Over **380**
Applicants on the social housing wait list

8 Aged care facilities that offer

220 residential places

2
Retirement villages

Housing Stress

No of Renters or Homeowners

Rent more than 30% of HH income	2,047
Mortgage more than 30% of HH income	808

Stress Type
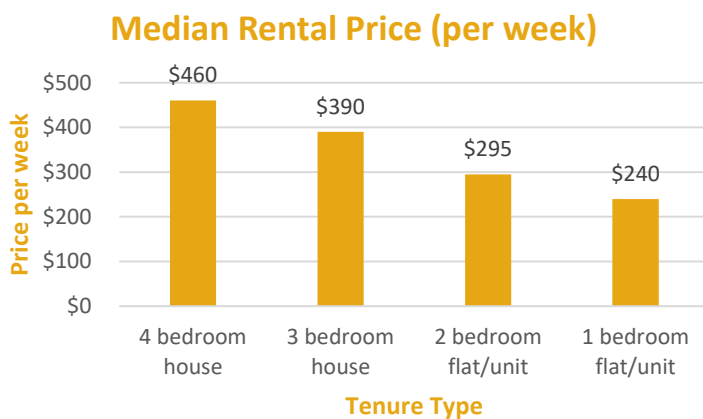
Homelessness - people living in....

- 38 — Improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out
- 55 — Supported accommodation for the homeless
- 76 — Staying temporarily with other households
- 42 — Boarding houses
- 7 — Other temporary lodgings
- 72 — Severly crowded dwellings
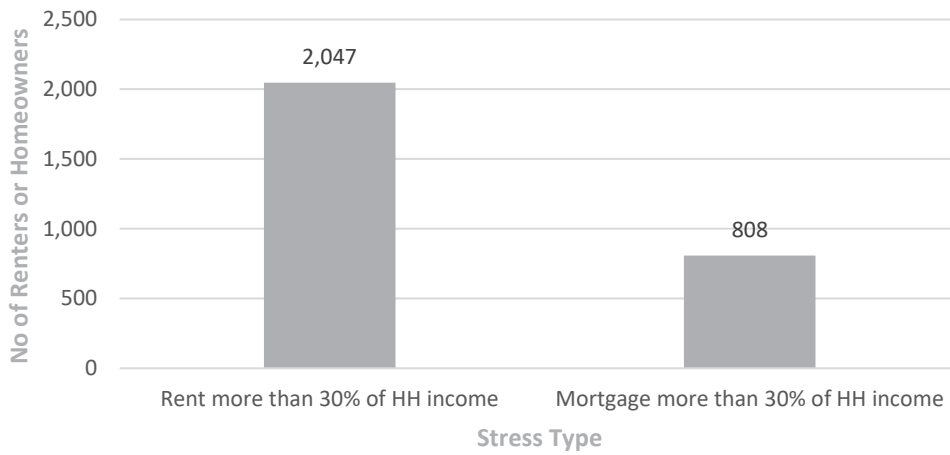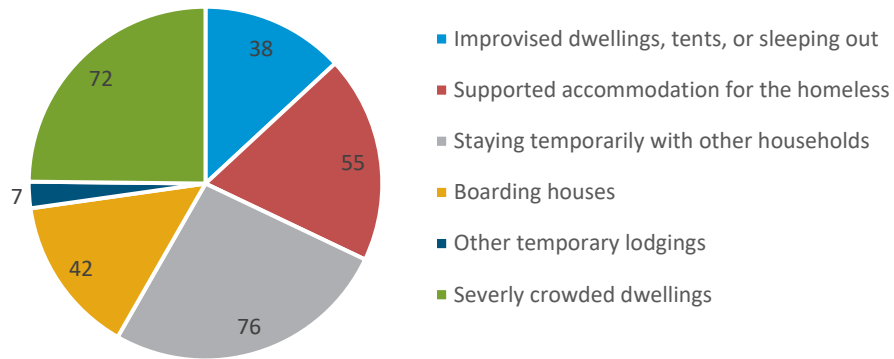
Total homeless 290

First Nation's Home Ownership

	Indigenous Households	Non-Indigenous Households
Home owned outright or w a mortgage	42%	68%
Private Rental	28%	20%
Social/Community Housing	18%	3.30%
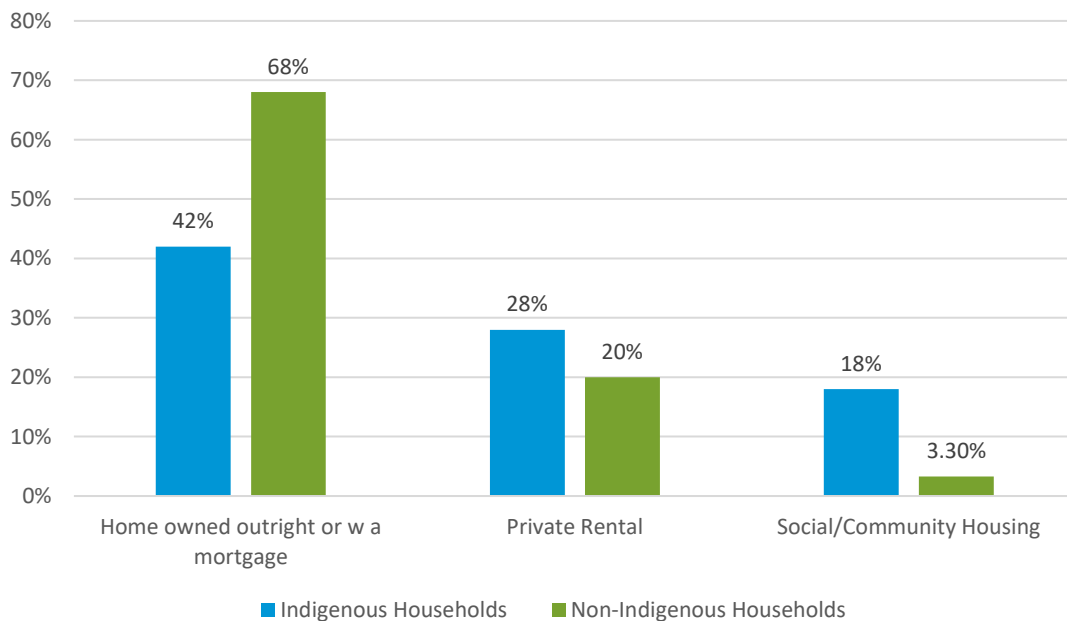
7.0 General Housing in the Gladstone Region

Background

The region's median residential sale price was $390,000 in 2021. The region recorded 2,269 dwelling sales, and 217 sales of new and vacant land. The median rent for a 3-bedroom house was $390 per week, with 862 rental applications lodged during 2022. The region has a vacancy rate of 1.6%.
Source: 2021 Census

Current Housing Situation

27,262 total private dwellings

19,810 houses
1,397 townhouses
1,639 apartments
273 other

The average number of people per household is 3.

Occupancy rate at the time of the 2021 Census was 85.03% with 4,081 unoccupied dwellings. The private dwellings are estimated to be 64% owner occupied and 33% rented. A breakdown of the dwelling ownership and type is:
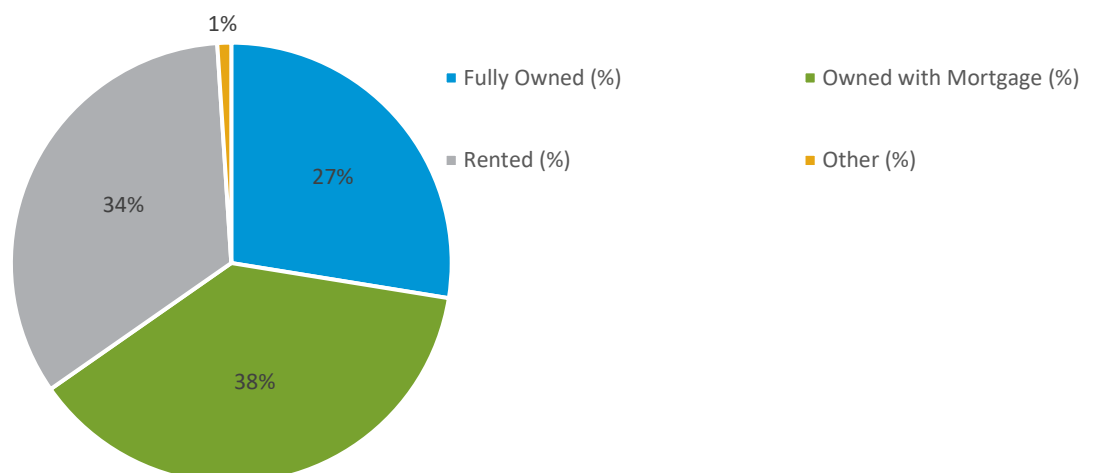

- Fully Owned (%) 27%
- Owned with Mortgage (%) 38%
- Rented (%) 34%
- Other (%) 1%

7.1 Local Government Employee Housing

Council is undertaking a strategic review of our residential properties to identify need and future use.

At the time of preparing this plan, Council owns 13 residential dwellings including:

- 1 used for employee housing

- 7 leased to a non-for-profit affordable housing organisation to provide affordable housing in the region

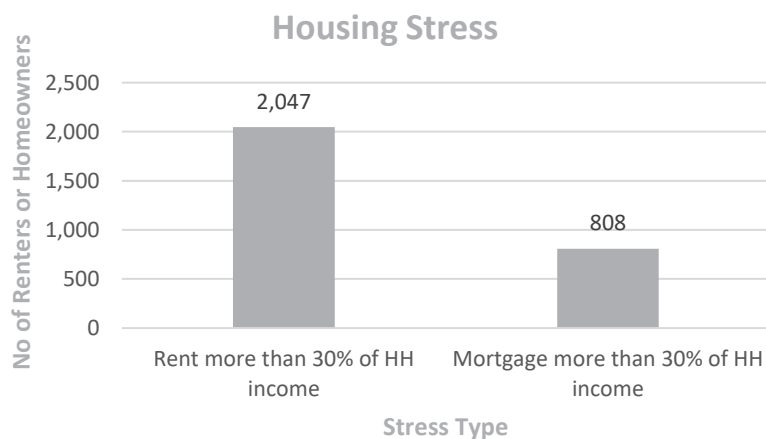- 5 leased through a commercial real estate firm into the market.

Housing is a priority for Council, as highlighted in Council's 2023/24 Strategic Priorities. Council recognises the role we can play, whilst also advocating for solutions to the housing crisis.

7.2 Private Rental Market

Almost all local government areas in Queensland are considered to have 'tight' rental markets (characterised by a vacancy rate under 2.5%). Over three quarters of Queensland local government areas (77%) have vacancy rates under 1% as at March 2022. The current rental vacancy rate (as of September 2023) is **1.6%** for the Gladstone Region.

Rent prices have significantly increased with median rent rising by 80% in Gladstone over five years. This followed a very low base, post the LNG boom in Gladstone.

(Source: Census 2021)

Housing Stress — chart showing No of Renters or Homeowners by Stress Type: Rent more than 30% of HH income = 2,047; Mortgage more than 30% of HH income = 808.

27% of private rental houses (2,047 rentals) in the Gladstone Region are 'unaffordable' *(where affordability is rent less than or equal to 30% of household income).*

Median Rental Price (per week)
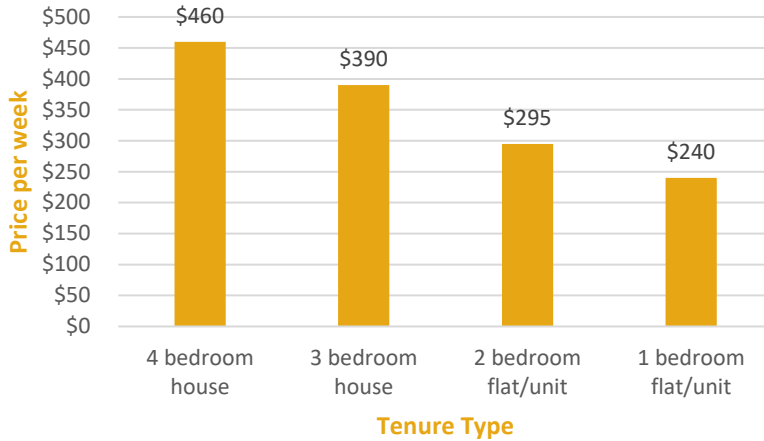
The median rental price for a four-bedroom house is $460 per week, and $390 per week for a three-bedroom house. The median rental price for a two-bedroom flat or unit is $295 per week, and $240 per week for a one-bedroom flat or unit.

7.3 Private Buying Market

In the 2022/23 Financial Year there were 1,828 detached dwelling sales in the Gladstone Region and 441 attached dwelling sales. Detached dwellings include standalone houses, while attached dwellings include apartments, units and duplexes. The median sale price was $407,500 for detached dwellings and $259,000 for attached dwellings.

Residential Sales
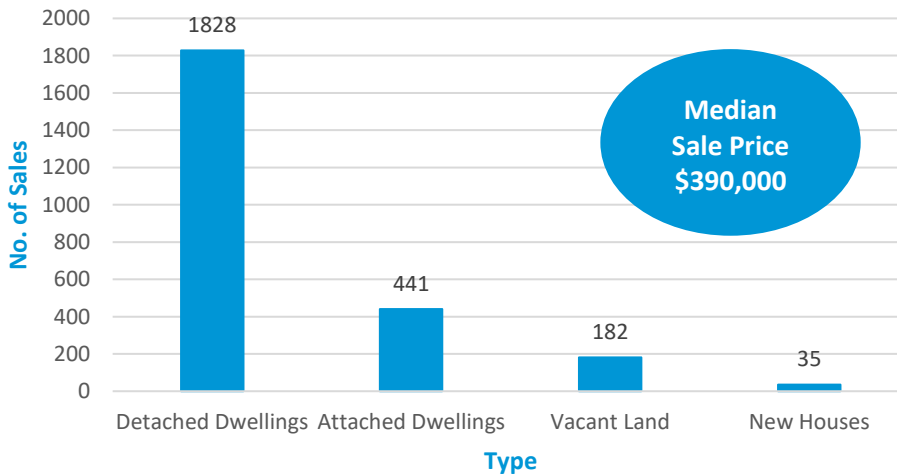
Residential Sales as %

Sales Prices for Attached & Detached Dwellings

Legend:
- Sales Price for Attached and Detached Dwellings Qld
- Sales Price for Attached and Detached Dwellings Gladstone Region

7.4 Social Housing

There is a high demand for social housing across Queensland and allocations are focussed on supporting households with the highest need. Weekly median household incomes in the Gladstone area are $1,639 compared to the Queensland median of $1,675.

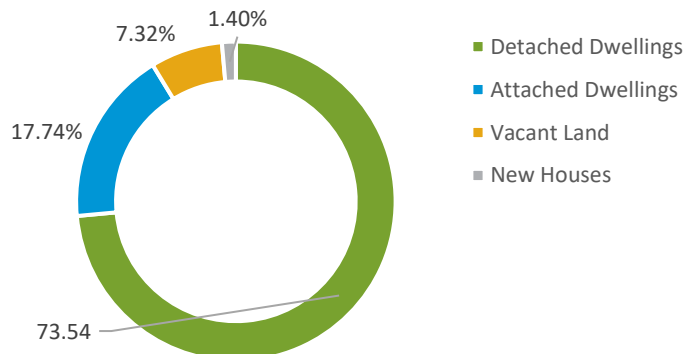As at June 2020, there were 883 social housing dwellings in the region. There are currently over 380 applicants on the waiting list with the average applicant having 1.7 people in the household as part of the application. 13.7% of people live in overcrowded social housing situations and 290 people are sleeping rough (Census, 2021).

It is understood that there have been 93 people on the waitlist for over 2.4 years which is in line with overall state-wide trends.

Weekly Median Household Incomes

Gladstone Region: $1,639
Queensland: $1,675

Overcrowding and 'couch surfing' have been seen as consequences of a challenging housing environment across the state and in the Gladstone Region. Local anecdotal reports have seen increases in family violence where adult children have had to move back into the family home.

With 380 Gladstone Region applicants on the social housing waitlist, there is a substantial need for many more social housing dwellings.
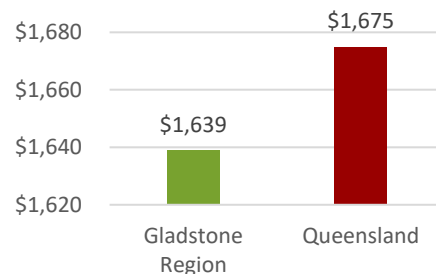
8.0 Case Study – Philip Street Communities and Families Precinct

The Gladstone Region 2028 Vision Project (circa 2008) recognised rapid population growth, demographic change and the cumulative impacts of significant industrial projects that increased pressure on social infrastructure to the detriment of the vulnerable residents in the Gladstone Region.

In 2009, the Gladstone Region Social Infrastructure and Strategic Plan (SISP) was developed in partnership with the former Gladstone Economic and Industry Development Board and the former Department of Infrastructure and Planning. The SISP recommended (as the 'number one priority' social infrastructure objective) the co-location and integration of human and social services and facilities, to address the fragmentation of the community support system.

The Philip Street Communities and Families Precinct (The Precinct) was proposed as the principal social infrastructure initiative to address current and future human and social services needs for the region. Council's Corporate Plan (2018-2023) mapped a clear direction towards creating a strong fabric of community connectedness, lifestyle, and enhanced liveability in the Gladstone Region.

It took several years to secure capital funding for stage 1 of the project. Sufficient funds for stage 1 were secured from the:
- Australian Government via the Regional Jobs and Investment Package
- Gladstone Foundation via the Salvation Army
- Gladstone Regional Council.

The Precinct has been designed to strengthen Gladstone's community and social service system by the clustering of community facilities to improve and enhance service delivery and community outcomes.

The Precinct recognises the central role communities play in supporting and protecting wellbeing through fostering social inclusion, connectedness, and enabling access to resources and services.

Opening to the public in August 2021, the Philip Street Communities and Families Precinct offers a unique opportunity for service providers and community groups to move beyond co-location to a true partnership model.

The Precinct's formal Advisory Committee advises Council on strategic planning, management, and service delivery to ensure services, programs and activities are responsive to community needs.

Future stages of The Precinct include further facilities to house additional service providers and developing land for over 55s living and social or affordable housing developments.

9.0 Key Focus Areas

Areas of focus have been determined through a review of existing data and engagement with stakeholders as identified in the methodology. These focus areas will be considered when identifying and prioritising actions.

9.1 Land and Development

At the time of developing this document, The Gladstone Region has several master planned residential estates for development of residential housing. The biggest challenge being faced to develop these parcels of land is stimulus for new dwelling construction in the face of supply chain issues.

Council continues to work on promoting the region to current and potential new developers. In 2022 Council released the *Glad to be in Gladstone* campaign which promotes the Gladstone Region as a great place to work, live, play and stay. It supports people and families relocating to the area and provides employers with a skills attraction toolkit to support in attracting skilled employees to the region. This webpage is also used to promote and showcase the region to potential developers.

Gladstone Regional Council has commenced a review of the current Planning Scheme. As part of this review, housing needs will be thoroughly considered along with a review of planning mechanisms to support supply and density of development. Council will also be reviewing and updating natural hazard mapping including flood and bush fire mapping to inform planning decisions, developers, and home buyers.

Council focuses on housing as part of our [2023/24 Strategic Priorities](). Through this advocacy work, Council have identified suitable land for housing and conducted an Expression of Interest (EOI) process for the development and provision of social or affordable housing. The process returned interest from multiple parties and Gladstone Regional Council is working through next steps and solutions with the preferred proponent. The several EOI responses highlights a strong need in the region.

Response Opportunities

Council continues to shine a light on the region through our *Glad to be in Gladstone* campaign along with other liveability campaigns. Council has begun a multi-year project to conduct a review of the Planning Scheme, ensuring that land supply meets the future needs of the community and emerging industries.

Actions

9.1.1   Continue promoting development of the region through liveability campaigns and targeted engagement

9.1.2   Continue working on social and/or affordable outcomes for the identified parcels of Council land

9.1.3   Engage with developers who are active in the region to better understand why they are not releasing blocks to the market.

9.1.4   Prepare and distribute an Investment Prospectus that shows investors and developers that the Gladstone Region is open for business and makes it easy to do business with us by highlighting key contacts, processes etc.

9.2 Planning & Critical Workers Accommodation

Attracting and retaining critical workers to the Gladstone Region is a key element in having a liveable community with quality social services including health and hospital services, police, and education.

Providing housing, or financial support for housing, can incentivise these critical workforces to our region, encouraging them to enjoy and take part in our communities whilst contributing to liveability through essential service provision.

In addition to the workforce requirements associated with these typically government delivered services, the Gladstone Region is crucial to the nation's transition to renewable energy with several renewable energy projects embracing hydrogen, biofuels and solar energy being proposed for the Gladstone State Development Area.

Without appropriate housing availability and affordability, regional areas are unable to attract or retain the workforce needed for renewable energy.

As well as the energy transition, the region is also home to several existing large industry employers and a history of housing large projects with hefty workforces. While the Gladstone Region is fortunate to have a dedicated workforce accommodation village (Homeground Village) used for temporary, fly-in fly-out and drive-in drive-out workforces, this does not attract workers to relocate themselves and their family to the region to be based where employment is.

These existing and potential new projects may increase the demand on local housing in the future. While a heavy industry heritage brings many social and economic benefits for our communities, finding suitable housing for workers can be difficult. As felt and seen by the LNG gas boom throughout 2011-2015, anecdotally the LNG boom caused house prices and rent to increase more than double over this period.

Response Opportunities

Incentivising critical workers to regional areas is vital to liveable communities with quality social services. Without critical workers, regional areas struggle to provide essential services including health, police, and education. Planning Schemes and housing supply need to enable suitable accommodation for critical workers.

Actions

9.2.1   Maintain a contemporary Planning Scheme that seeks to ensure currency and agility to be able to respond to the market, growth and changing demographics.

9.2.2   Support a mix of housing supply by:

- o   Ensuring the Planning Scheme encourages a mix of different types of housing for the land our region has available for development
- o   Ensuring zoning supports a varied mix of housing options e.g., low-density residential zone, low-medium density, medium density

9.2.3   Work with stakeholders to accommodate but also manage the social needs of critical workers who are new to the region – wrap experiences around them to help them become embedded in the community.

9.3 Optimisation - General Supply and Liveability

A safe place to call home is a basic need that everyone should have access to, regardless of status as a homeowner or renter.

A healthy and balanced housing environment means our community can access available, affordable housing options locally. It offers appropriate availability, diversity, and quality of housing in the region to support liveability, resilience, and social and economic growth.

A balance of supply options and demand supports availability and affordability for the market.
The housing environment and market has a heavy influence on liveability. The 2023 National Liveability Census found that access to *affordable decent housing* is the single biggest inhibitor to advancing quality of life in Australia. This is especially the case for young people, with the census finding people aged 18-34 placed a higher value on housing than older age groups.

Affordable decent housing was valued more in regional areas of Australia than those in metropolitan areas. This highlights the importance of accessibility and affordability for the Gladstone Region.

Areas and towns that enjoy high liveability support regions to attract and retain critical workforces such as police, doctors and teachers, which in-turn supports even greater liveability and the provision of basic needs and services for the community.

REMPLAN, a company that specialises in economic and demographic data, forecast that the below dwellings are needed to support population growth in the Gladstone Region between now and 2045:

2023	*30,281 total dwellings in the Gladstone Region*
2025	Additional 538 dwellings needed
2030	Additional 1,903 dwellings needed
2035	Additional 3,241 dwellings needed
2040	Additional 4,572 dwellings needed
2045	Additional 5,901 dwellings needed

Response Opportunities

Diversity in housing options and price points enables the community to have fit for purpose housing for a variety of needs and circumstances.

A range of housing options such as detached family homes, attached one- or two-bedroom apartments or townhouses, at a variety of price points, supports more of the community to access suitable housing at affordable prices.

Actions

9.3.1   Encourage the Queensland Government to define (or to advocate to the Federal Government to define) parameters for what constitutes 'affordable' housing to ensure the sustainability of affordability of the current community housing development and any future developments.

9.3.2   Work with the Queensland Government to adequately incentivise critical workers to live in regional areas by supporting housing e.g., providing housing or housing subsidies, bonus, or uplift payments for regional service/placement.

9.3.3   Continue to source and analyse data to understand future population and housing changes e.g., workforce growth related to green energy projects, and what this means for housing needs

9.3.4   Continue to work and engage with stakeholders including other levels of government, industry and community to plan for future growth

9.3.5   Gather and analyse data related to real estate searches to provide insight into demand for each type of product.

9.3.6   Explore modular builds, to allow for flexibility with changes in the market.

9.3.7   Consider hostels and rooming options as a product type that would support the 'singles' cohort gap.

9.3.8   Continue working with project proponents and industry stakeholders, both new and existing, to understand workforce and housing needs in the region.

9.3.9   Undertake a Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan review and develop Proponent Guidelines for new projects to the region to ensure investment in the region is meaningful and addresses future needs.

9.3.10   Work with the Queensland Government to include Gladstone in the incentive schemes for Government employees, as per Longreach and Emerald.

9.4 Master Planning

The Gladstone Region has several master-planned developments in place at the time of preparing this plan, as per below:

    6180 lots are included in preliminary approved master planned estates
    1025 lots have Development Permits in place
    305 lots are constructed ready to release to the market
    64 lots are in operational works construction phase

Actions identified in key focus areas within this plan, are required to support progress of the development of these lots.

Response Opportunities

Approvals are in place for several master-planned developments across the region. Challenges identified throughout this plan are impacting deliverability of construction of dwellings.

Support mechanisms identified throughout the plan, including measures to address cost of construction and labour shortages would support progress of developments.

Actions

9.4.1   Progress the identified actions in the land, planning and construction key focus areas to support progress toward development of existing master-planned developments in the region.

9.5 Supports and People in Need

Within this key focus area, sub-areas have been identified to further focus areas of need in the Gladstone Region.

Aged Care and Retirement
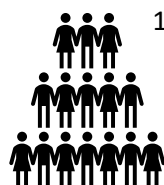
17,334 people aged 55 and over (27% of the population)
Projected to be 24,930 people aged 55 and over by 2046.

Source: https://app.remplan.com.au/gladstone/forecast/households?state=zazeTYj08FLwbZBHbj70ZiXu4SjkwTLakJT3sPQgB3hgSBYL

8 aged care facilities which offer 220 residential places

2 retirement villages currently operating in the region

The Gladstone Region has eight aged care facilities and two retirement villages operating to service the community.

Anecdotal community feedback tells us that limited vacancies, long wait times and shortfalls in amenity and aesthetics all contribute to seniors seeking aged care or retirement living out of the region.

At the time of developing this document there are two retirement villages/over 55s lifestyle resorts being constructed at the beachside area of Agnes Water.

Crisis Accommodation

Temporary crisis accommodation can be used in circumstances of domestic or family violence, emergency weather events (e.g., fires, flooding, cyclone), homelessness etc. For areas required to evacuate due to weather related emergencies, Council operates evacuation centres and temporary places of refuge.

The Gladstone Region faces challenges in the crisis accommodation space including long wait times and limited vacancies. Our region also lacks housing support to transition those utilising crisis accommodations back to long-term sustainable housing options.

Homelessness - people living in....

Pie chart legend:
- Improvised dwellings, tents, or sleeping out — 38
- Supported accommodation for the homeless — 55
- Staying temporarily with other households — 76
- Boarding houses — 42
- Other temporary lodgings — 7
- Severly crowded dwellings — 72
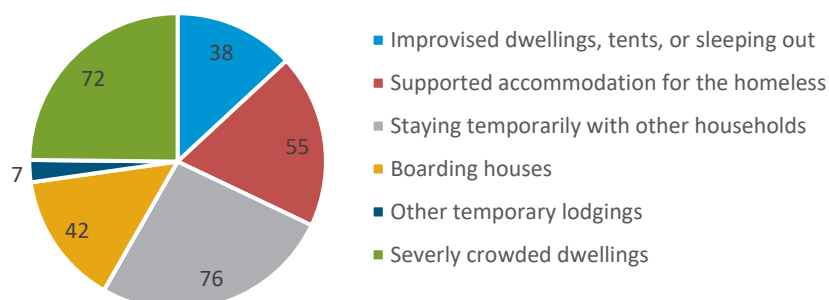
Youth

In a tight rental market with record low vacancy rates, our youth and young people are facing challenges and barriers to finding suitable housing. With limited or no rental history and rental references, our young people are finding it harder than ever to be accepted for rental housing.

Roseberry Queensland, a non-for-profit organisation, dedicated to providing services for young people and families who are experiencing difficulty, offer shelter and housing for homeless youth amongst a range of other supports.

Single People

For single people experiencing distress or disadvantage, there are no referral points and no crisis accommodation in the Gladstone Region, and they are often sent to the neighbouring towns of Rockhampton or Bundaberg.

Additionally, people with a single income are sometimes considered a less desirable prospect for rentals.

The current product mix does not support single people looking for a first home as most of the stock in the region is three- or four-bedroom houses.

First Nations People

132 First National people are on the social housing waitlist in the Gladstone Region, accounting for just over 40% of the total waitlist.

8951 First Nations people are on the social housing waitlist across Queensland.

The Australian Government's Institute of Health and Welfare reports that stable housing is a key social determinant of health outcomes for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander families. Their 2013 Closing the Gap report finds that the relationship between housing outcomes and health outcomes is bi-directional: housing affects health and health affects housing outcomes. Along with impacting health outcomes, secure and stable housing also provides the opportunity to pursue and take part in other social wellbeing and economic opportunities including employment and education.
First Nation's home ownership stats (Source: 2021 Census).

Housing tenure type	Indigenous Households 2021	Non-Indigenous Households 2021
Home owned outright or with a mortgage	42%	68%
Private rental	28%	20%
Social or Community housing	18%	3.3%

While the 2021 Census data shows a gap between First Nations and non-First Nations home ownership, the most alarming difference is in the need for social or community housing.

Social and Affordable Housing

The data used to prepare this report notes that there were **883** social housing tenancies in the Gladstone Region in 2021. The region faces a shortage in social housing in the Southern part of the region, with no social housing in Agnes Water and 1770.

A safe and secure home is at the heart of wellbeing. The Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute reports that a lack of secure housing is found to affect mental health of adults, children and family stability, which is shown to be linked to attendance, performance and completion rates for children at school.

Along with children's educational outcomes, secure housing is also linked to improved health outcomes in children and adults alike.

These are just some of the reasons why it is critical for everyone to have a secure roof over their heads and a safe place to call home. This basic provision is key to economic and social wellbeing outcomes. The provision of social housing brings challenges for regional areas who may not have appropriate social services that support the holistic needs of social housing users. Suitable wrap around services, such as financial counselling and employment support, should go hand in hand with the provision of social housing.

Another challenge for the liveability of regional areas is the design and location of social housing. Improved outcomes are observed when social housing is spread throughout suburbs instead of co-located in high density areas. Social housing design is also important to liveability, for example high density social and/or affordable housing apartment complexes with no off-street parking results in streets and footpaths congested with vehicles, reducing the aesthetics and amenity, and increasing safety risks. Intermixing well designed social housing with other housing types also supports liveability, appeal and aesthetics for the town and region as a whole.

The 2021 Census classifies affordable housing as where the cost of housing (mortgage repayment or rent) is less than 30% of household income. The below table shows how many households in the Gladstone Region are in unaffordable housing.

	Gladstone Region	Queensland
Rent more than 30% of household income	26.5%	32.3%
Mortgage more than 30% of household income	10%	11.9%
Total	36.5% of Gladstone Region housing is considered 'unaffordable'.	44.2% of Queensland housing is considered in 'unaffordable'.

Ensuring new and future housing stock is kept 'affordable' is a challenge being faced in the Gladstone Region, and more broadly. With the recent increases in house and rent prices and building and developing, prices have increased significantly across the board.

With Council recently undertaking an Expression of Interest to gift a parcel of land to a community housing provider to build affordable housing, it will be important to define what is 'affordable' when it comes to housing, to ensure the sustainability of affordability of this, and future, developments both in the Gladstone Region specifically and more broadly across the State.

Response Opportunities

Well planned and designed social and affordable housing supports liveability and amenity for all. The addition of adequate social services and wrap around supports such as accessible and affordable health services, employment support and financial counselling, supports success for specific cohorts within the community.

Actions

9.5.1   Support construction of new developments, and explore the opportunity for a subsidised, pooled workforce.

9.5.2   Provide capability building programs for untapped markets, that would provide labour to fill construction skill gaps.

9.5.3   Council to continue referral services via the Gladstone Region Neighbourhood Centre for supports and housing specific to the above cohorts.

9.5.4   Explore specific housing needs for First Nations people in the Gladstone Region to ensure appropriate housing typologies availability.

9.5.5   Work with the Queensland Government on appropriate locations and designs for future social housing.

9.5.6   Advocate to the Federal Government for reinstatement or a replacement of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) funding, so the region's current social housing stock is not affected and those living in these homes are not displaced.

9.5.7   Unlock empty, unused or abandoned properties in the region to increase existing housing supply.

9.5.8   Ensure rental subsidy programs are accessible and are meeting needs of those requiring them.

9.6 Construction and Approvals

Increasing pressures on construction costs and supply chains challenge the market's ability to respond to an increase in housing demand. The vulnerable and low-income households end up most affected by longer construction timeframes and higher costs.

While developing residential housing sits outside of Council's remit, Gladstone Regional Council is actively looking at opportunities to positively influence construction timeframes and building approvals where possible.

In early 2023, in response to increased demand and construction activity, Council secured an additional full-time certifier to ensure building approvals and certifications were efficient and effective. Council is committed to providing timely building certification services and this additional resource is now a permanent position in our organisation.

Along with an additional Building Certifier, Council has improved our low-risk development application processes, resulting in a 70 per cent decrease in the average number of business days taken for processing.

Response Opportunities

Council is committed to continuing to do what it can to ensure efficient, effective and timely building approvals and certification, as well as continuing to work on incentivising the region to current and potential new developers, as highlighted in earlier sections of this report (Land and General Supply and Liveability).

Actions

9.6.1   A focus on incremental continuous improvements in application processing, to ensure Council is efficiently and effectively and supporting housing construction in the region.

9.6.2   Work with the Queensland Government to provide funded Development Assessment positions, for regional Councils impacted by large or cumulative renewal energy projects and the associated growth.

9.6.3   During Gladstone Regional Council's planning scheme review, consider:

- o   Density needs, including opportunities for secondary dwellings (e.g., granny flats) on existing blocks of land

- o   Housing design guidelines

- o   Ensure zoning supports a varied mix of housing options e.g., low density residential, low-medium density, medium density etc.

9.6.4   Balancing amenity and liveability of our towns and regions with opportunities to impact housing supply.

9.6.5   Develop a 'Build in Gladstone' campaign.

9.6.6   Explore housing models similar to the Defence Housing Model to entice 'Mum and Dad' investors back into the market.

9.6.7   Develop an action plan to address supply chain shortages in the region.

10. Response Opportunities

A Local Housing Action Plan enables engagement across all levels of government, and benefits from partnerships between private and not-for-profit organisations.

An initial set of tactical actions has been developed, enabling refinement through an ongoing iterative process. These actions provide for a targeted response and outcomes that will seek to either create immediate benefit or establish a foundation for the next phase of actions. More specific responses can then be determined that provide flexibility in delivery and support each of the broad areas identified.

11. Actions

Council, with the support of the Queensland Government through the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan 2021-2025, is committed to progressing delivery of its initial Local Housing Action Plan through this set of actions, developed to target immediate to longer term housing responses. This is an iterative process, and these actions and target outcomes will seek to either create immediate benefit or to establish foundations that help respond to ongoing housing need.

9.1	Land and Development	Responsible
9.1.1	Continue promoting development of the region through liveability campaigns and targeted engagement.	Council
9.1.2	Continue working on social and/or affordable outcomes for the identified parcels of council-owned land.	Council
9.1.3	Engage with developers who are active in the region to better understand why they are not releasing blocks to the market.	Council
9.1.4	Prepare and distribute an Investment Prospectus that tells investors and developers that the Gladstone Region is open for business and makes it easy to do business with us by highlighting key contacts, processes etc.	Council

9.2	Planning	Responsible
9.2.1	Maintain a contemporary Planning Scheme that seeks to ensure currency and agility to be able to respond to the market, growth and changing demographics.	Council
9.2.2	Support a mix of housing supply by: • Ensuring the Planning Scheme encourages a mix of different types of housing for the land our region has available for development • Ensuring zoning supports a varied mix of housing options e.g., low-density residential zone, low-medium density, medium density	Council
9.2.3	Work with stakeholders to accommodate but also manage the social needs of critical workers who are new to the region – wrap experiences around them to help them become embedded in Community.	Community Stakeholders

9.3	Optimisation	Responsible
9.3.1	Define (or advocate to the Federal Government to define) parameters for what constitutes 'affordable' housing to ensure the sustainability of affordability of the current community housing development and any future developments.	State Government

9.3.2	Adequately incentivise critical workers to live in regional areas by supporting housing e.g., providing housing or housing subsidies, bonus or uplift payments for regional service/placement.	State Government
9.3.3	Continue to source and analyse data to understand future population and housing changes e.g., workforce growth related to green energy projects, and what this means for housing needs.	Council
9.3.4	Continue to work and engage with stakeholders including other levels of government, industry and community to plan for future growth.	Council
9.3.5	Gather and analyse data related to real estate searches to provide insight into demand for each type of product.	Community Stakeholders
9.3.6	Explore modular builds, to allow for flexibility with changes in the market.	Community Stakeholders
9.3.7	Consider hostels as a product type that would support the 'singles' cohort gap.	State Government
9.3.8	Continue working with project proponents and industry stakeholders, both new and existing, to understand workforce and housing needs in the region.	Council State Government
9.3.9	Undertake a Social Infrastructure Strategic Plan review and develop Proponent Guidelines for new projects to the region to ensure investment in the region is meaningful and addresses future needs.	Council
9.3.10	Include Gladstone in the incentivised schemes for Government employees, as per Longreach and Emerald.	State Government

9.4	Master planning	Responsible
9.4.1	Progress the identified actions in the land, planning and construction key focus areas to support progress toward development of existing master-planned developments in the region.	Council State Government Community Stakeholders

9.5	Supports	Responsible
9.5.1	Support construction of new developments, and explore the opportunity for a subsidised, pooled workforce.	State Government
9.5.2	Provide capability building programs for untapped markets, that would provide labour to fill construction skill gaps.	State Government

9.5	People in need	Responsible
9.5.3	Continue referral services via the Gladstone Region Neighbourhood Centre for supports and housing specific to the above cohorts.	Council
9.5.4	Investigate specific housing needs for First Nations people in the Gladstone Region to ensure appropriate housing typologies availability.	State Government Federal Government
9.5.5	Explore appropriate locations and designs for future social housing.	State Government
9.5.6	Advocate to the Federal Government for reinstatement or a replacement of the National Rental Affordability Scheme (NRAS) funding, so the region's current social housing stock is not affected and those living in these homes are not displaced.	State Government Federal Government
9.5.7	Unlock empty, unused or abandoned properties in the region to increase existing housing supply.	State Government
9.5.8	Ensure rental subsidy programs are accessible and are meeting needs of those requiring them.	State Government

9.6	Construction	Responsible
9.6.1	Focus on incremental continuous improvements in application processing, to ensure Council is efficiently and effectively and supporting housing construction in the region.	Council
9.6.2	Provide funded Development Assessment positions, for regional Councils impacted by large or cumulative renewal energy projects and the associated growth.	State Government
9.6.3	During Council's planning scheme review consider: • Density needs, including opportunities for secondary dwellings (e.g., granny flats) on existing blocks of land. • Housing design guidelines. • Ensure zoning supports a varied mix of housing options e.g., low density residential, low-medium density, medium density etc.	Council
9.6.4	Balance the amenity and liveability of our towns and regions with opportunities to impact housing supply.	Council
9.6.5	Develop a 'Build in Gladstone' campaign.	Community Stakeholders

9.6.6	Explore housing models similar to the Defence Housing Model to entice 'Mum and Dad' investors back into the market.	Community Stakeholders
9.6.7	Develop an action plan to address the supply chain shortages in the region.	Community Stakeholders

	Capital solutions	Responsible
	Work to ensure that Gladstone is highlighted as a single focus area, ensuring that sight of our unique opportunities and challenges are not lost within a Central Queensland focus.	State Government Council

Next Steps

Council continues to actively engage with local stakeholders to facilitate and advocate for the actions within this document. Council will monitor and report on progress to the actions.