

## Advocacy Priorities 2026–2027

# Rating of Social and Affordable Housing

### Council Position

That social and affordable housing is subject to local government rates.

### Background

The Town of Bassendean currently grants rate exemptions to around 40 properties — representing approximately 1% of annual rate revenue. This impact is expected to grow as social and affordable housing delivery continues to expand.

While the Town strongly supports increased housing supply, local governments cannot continue to absorb the associated revenue loss. These properties rely on the full range of local infrastructure and services but make no contribution towards their cost.

Ambiguity in the *Local Government Act 1995* around “charitable purposes” is driving inconsistent application and legal uncertainty across jurisdictions, creating administrative burden and risk.

As housing delivery shifts to not-for-profit providers and State investment accelerates, more land will be removed from the rating base. This trend is unsustainable, undermining financial viability and the fairness of the rating system by shifting costs onto other households and businesses.

Targeted legislative reform and State support are urgently needed to address this growing inequity. ►

## What the Town plans to do

The Town of Bassendean, with support from WALGA, is seeking to:

- Obtain legal advice as to whether the provision of affordable housing is likely to fall within the meaning of the relief of poverty for the purposes of section 6.26 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. If not, obtain legal advice as to whether the minority provision of social housing within a mixed social/affordable housing development alters the position.
- Advocate to the State Government to agree to require all Community Housing Providers to fund the payment of local government rates for affordable housing.
- Seek interest of like-minded local governments to identify and fund a suitable test case through the State Administrative Tribunal (SAT) and potentially, the Supreme Court.
- Re-engage with relevant Ministers through targeted advocacy, acknowledging previous unsuccessful approaches.

