

# A National Housing Affordability Crisis

By Chris Simpson, 2024

We have a national crisis on our hands, with a lack of affordable housing across Australia. Two years ago, in April 2022, I expressed concern about this issue in an online article

<https://www.democrats.org.au/dynamic-shift-needed-on-housing/>, and it is clear nothing has changed.

Many residents in the Sandgate electorate are personally affected by this issue, and are looking to local, state, and federal governments to step in and deliver on their affordable housing election promises. However, so far little or nothing has been done (in Sandgate or elsewhere) to alleviate this urgent problem.

Brisbane City Council spent considerable time and money updating the Sandgate District Neighbourhood Plan in 2021 for Sandgate, Deagon, Shorncliffe, and Brighton. We were advised that Council was “committed to growing our city while maintaining the character of our suburbs and planning for the future”.

In my 2022 article, I pointed out that “attempts by government to address the issue have been underfunded, disorganised and lack any sort of national plan, despite multiple federal senate committee reports dating back many years that have called for one”. So, will the Sandgate Plan also end up on a shelf gathering “dust”?

The risk of flooding due to rising sea water levels and severe weather events may also reduce supply of affordable housing. As we know, many homes in our Sandgate community were recently affected by flooding, with many needing repairs or complete rebuilds. We could do a great deal to flood-proof our area, NOW. I will do everything within my power to change this lack of action!

I am convinced that we would already have a lot more affordable (rentable and purchasable) homes in our Sandgate community if all levels of government had worked together. However, sadly this has not been the case, and it is Sandgate residents on low incomes who are now paying the price for this failure.

There are opportunities to build new affordable housing close to transport and services within our community, a positive development for our community. We must ensure appropriate community consultation, planning, and thorough flood proofing.

Governments can borrow money more cheaply than private companies, and from that perspective it makes sense to call on government to borrow at low-interest rates to fund the construction of affordable homes. With collaboration, proper planning and execution, adequate return on investment can be realised quickly, and from that perspective it is “a no-brainer”.

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