

Concurrent 15: The building role of local governments

Glenn Menner





Brimbank
City Council

**WE ARE
BRIMBANK.**

A rock and a hard place: how can local government do more to increase social and affordable housing supply?



Glenn Menner

**National Housing
Conference – October 2023**

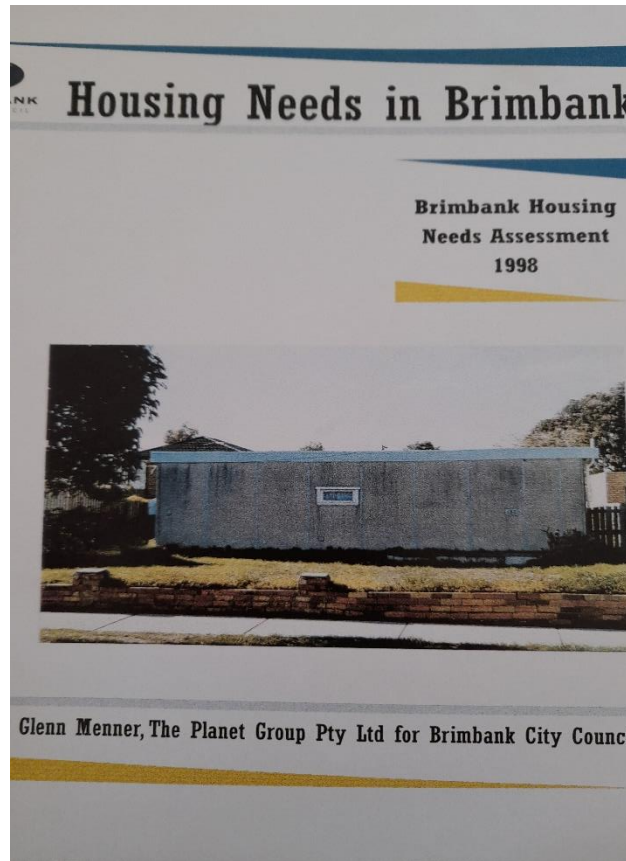
My premise



Brimbank
City Council

**What roles can local government play in
creating pathways towards housing solutions?**

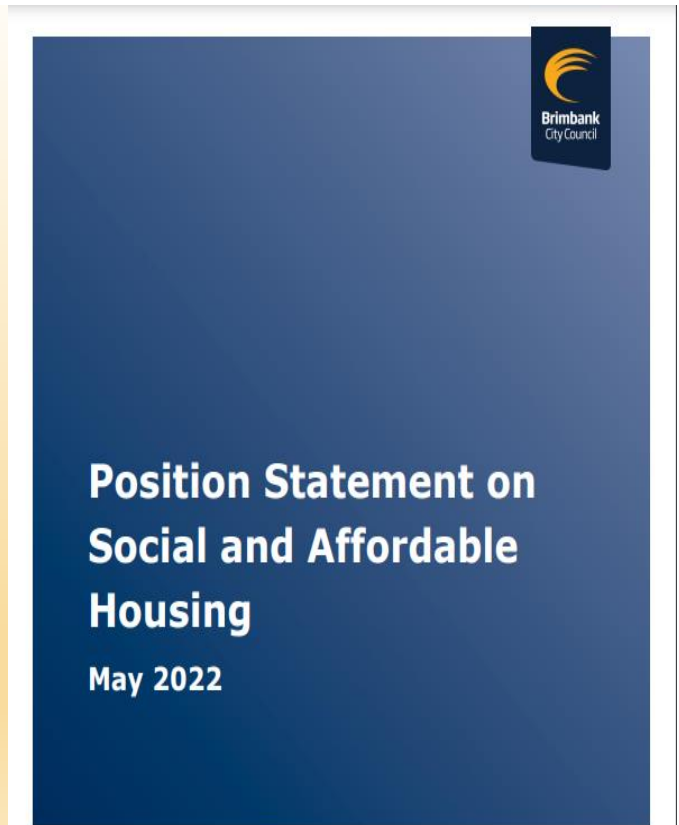
Personal reflection



1998 – demand side focus - needs analysis



2022 - supply side focus – roles and opportunities





Current unmet need

Estimate	4,800
As proportion of all households	7.2%

The Guardian
A decade of making a difference

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Outer suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney are homelessness hotspots, data reveals

Exclusive: People are reaching crisis point well away from the centre of Australia's largest cities, before travelling huge distances for housing support

“... in Melbourne, the western LGA of **Brimbank** is the local government area with the **highest level of homelessness**, with 3,801 people living there the week prior to accessing housing help....”

SUNSHINE IS A CITY READY TO SHINE

**LEVERAGING OFF MAJOR
INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT,
THERE IS A ONCE IN A GENERATION
OPPORTUNITY TO CREATE JOBS,
EDUCATION PATHWAYS AND
A VIBRANT AND SUSTAINABLE
FUTURE FOR THE PEOPLE IN
MELBOURNE'S WEST.**



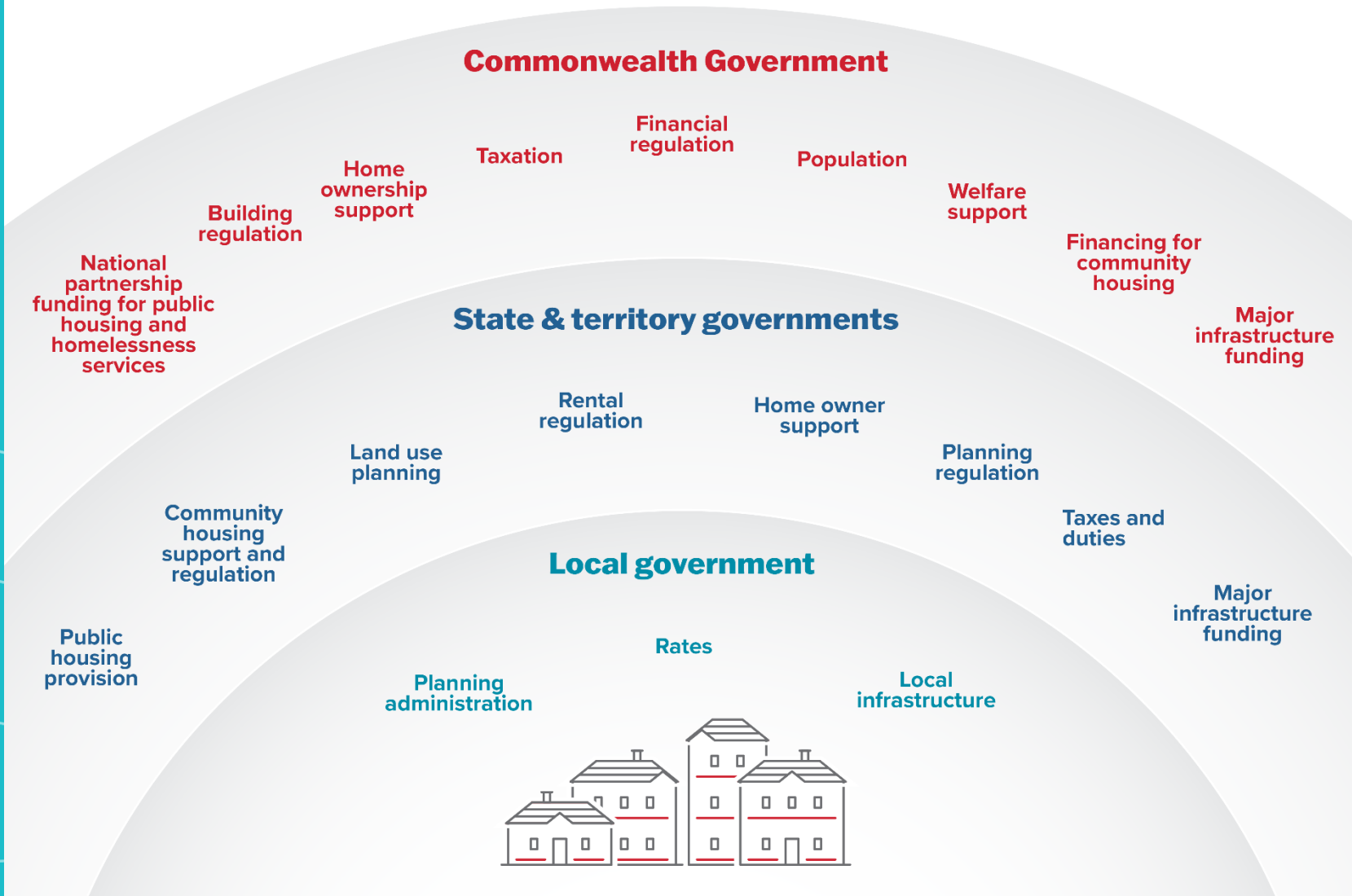
Role of local government

Where does local government fit into the picture? There is no clear mandated role nationally for councils in housing and homelessness policy and practice.

While there are examples of some councils actively contributing to **direct provision** of social and affordable housing, the majority of councils (such as Brimbank) tend to focus on **advocacy, planning and facilitation**.

Councils can and do play other important roles, **not just to increase supply**.

Housing policy levers of Commonwealth, state and territory, and local governments



Demand side focus

Locality

- Homelessness hotspots, increasingly becoming first responders without the resources or mandate

Service provision

- Housing and homelessness service access points, council services and facilities, other health and community service providers

Evidence base

- Housing and homelessness data and trend analysis

Prevention/early intervention

- Protocols, referrals, cross sectoral partnerships, assertive outreach, connectors

Supply side focus

Planner

- Land use policy and processes, encouraging and negotiating social and affordable housing contributions through voluntary agreements (not mandatory in Victoria)

Advocate

- engaging with decision-makers within other levels of government, as well as peak bodies, industry and other key stakeholders

Facilitator

- building relationships with community housing providers, private developers, government agencies and the local community

Partner#

- exploring the use of Council-owned assets or other contributions

Some solutions

1. Use planning system to increase supply through **mandatory contributions** focused on meeting local targets
2. **Social and affordable housing as social infrastructure** – increase supply via developer contributions or levies
3. Councils are well placed to **identify suitable locations** and suitable **housing types** based on community need and proximity to services and facilities
4. With resourcing and support, councils can undertake **land audits and feasibility studies** of all government land (not just council land)
5. With resourcing and support, councils can play an important role to prevent homelessness by **connecting support services** to the people that need them

Where to from here?

The National Housing and Homelessness Plan provides an opportunity to formally recognise and mandate local government roles in demand and supply side solutions, with Federal/State funding programs to support locally based interventions that result in new social and affordable housing while preventing homelessness and enabling early intervention.