

Appendix C - Media Coverage of proposal

Preston carpark could become social housing site under new proposal

Richard Pearce, Preston Leader

June 22, 2018 12:00am

A CARPARK behind Preston police station could become the latest site for affordable housing under a Darebin Council proposal.

Councillors voted to begin a consultation process with the community over whether the site should be leased to a housing organisation and turned into low-cost residences.

The site, at 52-60 Townhall Ave, Preston, would be given to the tenant with restrictions on the use of the land, such as retaining the public carpark.

The Lord Mayor's Charitable Foundation will work with the council on the project and potentially contribute advisers, a \$1 million grant and a \$2 million loan.

Darebin Mayor Kim Le Cerf said the exploration was a sign of how committed the council was to increasing the availability of affordable housing in the municipality.

"This is an exciting opportunity to explore a new approach to affordable housing and work with the philanthropic sector," Cr Le Cerf said.

The site is approximately 1,140 square metres and valued at \$3.6 million, but would be leased to a provider for a nominal amount.

Haven Home Safe operations executive director Trudi Ray said the organisation had seen a significant increase in people in Darebin accessing crisis and long-term accommodation.

"We commend the Darebin City Council on progressively looking and exploring how council-owned land can be best used to contribute to increasing affordable housing supply," she said.

Last month, the Council to Homeless Persons warned Melbourne's stock of affordable one and two-bedroom rentals had fallen to "crisis" levels.

Its analysis of rental data showed the number of affordable one-bedroom rentals had fallen to zero, and the number of affordable two-bedroom rentals had plummeted to just nine.

In 2016 council explored three possible sites for affordable housing, including Townhall Ave and council land on Robinson Rd, Reservoir and the Northcote Plaza car park.

Community consultation on the site will begin on June 25.

Darebin Council slams Townhall Avenue public housing tower claims as “myth”

Richard Pearce, Preston Leader

August 7, 2018 3:30am

THERE will be no high rise tower or public housing on a key piece of Preston land, Darebin Council says.

The council declaration follows the distribution of a flyer to letterboxes depicting a high rise housing commission development at Townhall Ave.

The No Townhall Tower group sent a flyer to residents featuring the digitally altered image of a high-rise building on the street, along with claims the development would have “massive long term negative impacts” on the area.

But the council has ruled out both the possibility of public housing and a high-rise tower at the site and said the claims on the flyer were a “myth” and were misleading residents.

The council’s acting chief executive Cathy Henderson said the current consultation and feedback period about the site was only to explore the possibility of leasing it for housing and all decisions on the use, size and shape of any development would be made in the future.

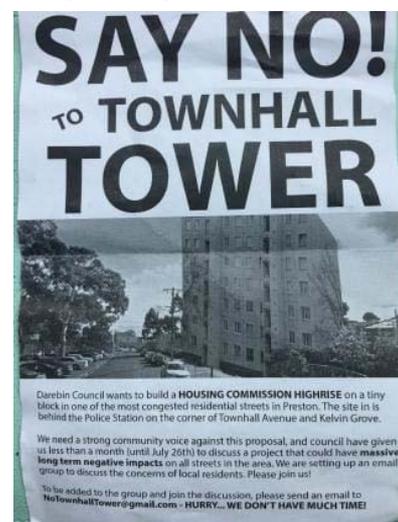
“The insights we gain through the submission process will be fed into the process for selecting a tenant and the aspirations and concerns of the community will be captured and incorporated into the requirements for the development,” Ms Henderson said.

A submissions hearing will be held on August 20 and the council will make a decision on whether to lease the land in November.

No Townhall Tower convener Vince Cuni said the community hadn’t been given enough time to voice their concerns and affordable housing was a State Government issue.

“The state and federal levels do this stuff every day, they know how to do it and put it all together,” he said. “(The council) are just going to hand it off to somebody and say ‘here you go’.”

The council has been vocal in its opposition to the sell-off of the Walker St public housing estate.



The flyer placed in letterboxes around the Townhall Ave site.