

ECONOMIC INTEL. UNIT CASE STUDY SEASONAL WORKFORCE SUITABLE HOUSING

The Challenge

A client with a highly seasonal workforce was facing a growing staff housing challenge. Staffing levels increased substantially during peak operating periods, placing pressure on a limited supply of employer-provided housing. At the same time, nearby private rental markets offered few practical alternatives due to limited availability, high shelter costs, and affordability challenges for younger, seasonal, and lower-income employees.

The client needed a clear understanding of how many employees could be accommodated within its existing housing stock, how many would need to rely on private-market options, and how large the housing shortfall could become under different staff-housing targets. They approached Turner Drake for a comprehensive staff housing needs assessment combining workforce analysis, housing inventory review, local market research, affordability testing, and scenario modelling.

Turner Drake's Approach

Turner Drake's Economic Intelligence Unit began the assignment by identifying staff housing supply and demand gaps based on the expected number of employees, current occupied units, housing types, and incomes. The analysis examined workforce patterns across peak and off-season periods, including employee location, age distribution, tenure, income, and seasonal staffing levels. Employer-provided rents were then compared against nearby private market housing costs to assess the affordability pressures of suitable substitutes.

To quantify the scale of the issue, Turner Drake developed housing gap scenarios based on different proportions of staff housed by the client, testing the implications of housing approximately 38%, 45%, 60%, and 75% of staff, both with and without temporary leased housing units.

The analysis found that existing housing could accommodate only a portion of the peak-season workforce. The report also showed that the issue was not simply the number of housing units, but whether the available housing aligned with workforce needs. Younger, seasonal, and lower-income employees required affordable and flexible options, while some existing units were better suited to different household types or required maintenance and reinvestment.

Turner Drake provided short-, medium-, and long-term recommendations, including maximizing existing housing, reviewing allocation practices, reassessing occupancy standards, exploring densification and repurposing opportunities, and planning for sustainable, adaptable housing solutions.

Winning Results

Turner Drake's Economic Intelligence Unit developed an evidence-based staff housing needs assessment combining workforce analysis, housing inventory review, local market demographic research, affordability testing, and scenario modelling.

By connecting staff demographics, affordability, private-market constraints, existing asset conditions, and future housing scenarios, Turner Drake helped establish a clear path toward improving recruitment, retention, and operational resilience.

