



15 July 2020

Housing Strategy Implementation Unit
Land and Housing Corporation
NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment
Locked Bag 4009
Ashfield BC NSW 1800

Inner West Council submission regarding 'A Housing Strategy for NSW Discussion Paper', July 2020

To whom it may concern,

The Inner West Council welcomes the opportunity to comment on the NSW Government's Discussion Paper: A Housing Strategy for NSW. This submission seeks to support the Discussion Paper's vision and provide input on how the vision can be achieved.

The Discussion Paper recognises the key role that councils play in the planning, regulation and supply of housing in local communities. In this regard it notes the significance of Local Strategic Planning Statements and Local Housing Strategies, together with other strategic planning processes, that help define the role that councils play in influencing housing design and supply in their local area. The following discussion outlines Council's suggestions in relation to the proposed themes in the Discussion Paper:

Theme 1: Housing supply in the right locations and at the right time

1. An enhanced data collection regime is required to document how existing housing stock is changing across NSW. The primary source of this data is Local Government, however a State-Government-led standard for finer-grain data collection will enable a better understanding of how the existing housing stock is evolving over time and how Government/councils can better respond to changing community needs. Alterations and additions to existing housing has ramifications in terms of its size, quality/condition and affordability. For example, a one-bedroom cottage in Leichhardt, rebuilt as a four-bedroom dwelling has the capacity to accommodate larger households. This sort of information is required to understand the housing affordability challenges facing existing built up areas.
2. Reference is made to better utilising available NSW Government-owned land. It is recommended that Council be meaningfully consulted on the re-development of government land such as The Bays Precinct. Government land proposed for redevelopment should have inclusionary zoning targets. Inner West LSPS recommends that 30% of residential development in Bays Precinct be provided as affordable housing.

Theme 2: Diverse housing for diverse needs

1. A direction is required under this theme to improve affordable housing options for priority groups facing housing stress including women and their children escaping domestic violence, older women aged 55 and above and the LGBTQI community. The LGBTQI group have a relatively large representation within the Inner West LGA and live in a range of housing types and price points. Including this direction would enable the housing needs of this group to be acknowledged, understood and delivered. Expanding the funding of affordable housing programs managed by Community Housing providers for these priority groups is recommended.
2. The Discussion Paper identifies the need for future housing programs to address the growing needs of ageing population and the existing housing disadvantages suffered by people with a disability. 'Ageing in place' models, the application of universal design, as well as broadening the requirement for dwellings to be accessible, would help address these pressures.

Theme 3: Housing that is more affordable

1. The chronic lack of social and affordable housing is well documented by the Discussion Paper. Council's research highlights the need to address high levels of housing stress, particularly among very low, low- and moderate-income households in the Inner West. Existing programs, including State Environmental Planning Policy No. 70 – Affordable Housing (Revised Schemes) (SEPP 70), are helpful but insufficient. As recognised by councils and key stakeholders such as Shelter NSW, Community Housing Industry Association, Homelessness NSW and many others, the NSW Government needs to boost its investment in social and affordable housing to effectively address the issues of affordability and homelessness.
2. The NSW Government should implement all recommendations contained in the Report to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces from the Council Boarding House Working Group (August 2019) relating to the Affordable Rental Housing SEPP.
3. In addition, the Discussion Paper clearly outlines issues associated with the rise of renting. While the recent changes to tenancy laws were well received, options to enter into secure longer-term leases and the ending of no grounds evictions would help reduce the precariousness of renting throughout the state.
4. The discussion paper raises options to assist first home buyers. State government spending would be better placed providing social, affordable housing and/or incentivising improvements to existing private housing to address some of the health and environmental issues associated with housing stock (as discussed below). Policy development at a State Government level is required to achieve these outcomes.
5. The COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated the undersupply of social and affordable housing in NSW. The Housing Strategy should incorporate directions to respond to this pandemic and reduce housing stress experienced by low- and moderate-income holders. To address the serious housing impacts of the pandemic and to support economic recovery, implementing a stimulus package supporting a long-term large scale social and affordable housing construction program is highly recommended.

Theme 4: Enduring and resilient housing

1. Improving environmental sustainability of existing housing, as well as residential precincts, is strongly supported. NSW Government should increase the minimum BASIX environmental sustainability targets for all new housing to be a national leader in energy efficiency and in tackling climate change.
2. Council supports the attention this theme has given to housing defects and design with poor environmental outcomes. These issues have negative health and financial ramifications for the occupant, with higher heating and cooling costs as well health ramifications for occupants of dwellings. While the discussion paper lists some initiatives to counter these issues, initiatives to address issues experienced by existing housing stock, particularly strata titled dwellings are absent, and this reflects the need for new initiatives in this regard.
3. It should be acknowledged that dwellings with poorer environmental outcomes (e.g. west facing rooms) and current or recent defects (e.g. water leaks and mould) are less attractive to potential tenants and are more likely to be let out at a lower price point. This makes them more accessible to those on lower incomes, and those who are more vulnerable in our community. Consideration should be given to improving housing standards to reduce disparity between different income groups.

Overall Council supports the NSW Government initiative to provide a strong framework to delivering housing in NSW. It is recommended that this Strategy be prepared in conjunction with an Implementation and Monitoring Plan which would provide more certainty to councils and communities regarding its implementation.

If the comments and views made in this submission require further clarification or discussion, please do not hesitate to contact **Gibran Khouri, Strategic Planner on 9392 5249** or by email at gibran.khouri@innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Daniel East'.

Daniel East

Acting Strategic Planning Manager

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