



## ANSWER TO SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS

**1. Can you elaborate on the planning or policy barriers that prevent you from using sites like the Northern Beaches nursing home for 'meanwhile use' as affordable housing? (Transcript, p 42)**

One of the main issues we encounter in seeking to repurpose sites for 'meanwhile use' as affordable housing is that such a change of use is not permitted in some cases by the existing development consent.

For example, the development consent for a retirement village or residential aged care facility may typically restrict the occupants to:

- Seniors (typically defined as individuals aged 60 and over),
- Residents in a facility providing aged care under the *Aged Care Act 1997 (Cth)*, or
- Individuals assessed as eligible for seniors housing by a social housing provider.

In those circumstances, even if a site becomes temporarily vacant, it cannot be used for general housing to people who do not meet this criteria. The processes to seek approvals for such a change in use are complex, time-consuming, and subject to regulatory hurdles. Addressing these challenges would require legislative and planning reforms to enable more adaptive reuse of potential sites for social and affordable housing.

**2. Do you have any recommendations for how the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines could be amended to help increase the availability of affordable housing for essential workers?**

A clear definition of essential worker housing is needed to ensure targeted support for workers critical to community functioning. Anglicare Sydney believes a definition of essential worker housing is needed and should be included in the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines. This would help prioritise housing solutions that enable essential workers to live near their workplaces.

Our Rental Affordability Snapshot highlights the stark reality of rental stress for essential workers in Greater Sydney. Many, including aged care workers, early childhood educators, and even school teachers, find fewer than 5% of rentals affordable. This crisis threatens workforce stability, service delivery, and community cohesion.

To increase the supply of affordable housing for essential workers, we recommend the following should be embedded in the NSW Ministerial Guidelines:

1. Strengthen the definition and prioritisation of essential worker housing
  - a. Establish a dedicated allocation of affordable housing in new developments for essential workers based in areas where there is a need.

- b. Update income thresholds to reflect local workforce needs, particularly in high-cost areas.
2. Improve affordability and incentivise development
  - a. Modernise rental pricing models to align with essential worker incomes rather than rigid market-based discounts.
  - b. Encourage institutional investment through tailored funding schemes.
  - c. Provide planning incentives and fast-tracked approvals for essential worker housing projects.
3. Expand government and private sector partnerships
  - a. Implement inclusionary zoning for affordable housing near hospitals, schools, and transport hubs.
  - b. Facilitate partnerships between government, community housing providers, and employers to deliver workforce housing where shortages are most acute.

Without these targeted reforms, essential workers will continue to be priced out of the communities they serve, worsening workforce shortages and reducing service availability. Updating the NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines to reflect the above recommendations is critical to ensuring essential workers have stable, affordable housing close to their workplaces.