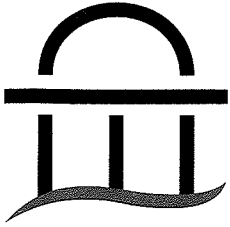


Submission

No 17

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Property Council of Australia
Name: Mr Glenn Byres
Position: NSW Executive Director
Date Received: 6/10/2011



Social Policy Committee
Parliament House
Macquarie Street
SYDNEY 2000

Email: socialpolicy@parliament.nsw.gov.au

Dear Sir/Madam

Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in NSW

The Property Council of Australia welcomes the opportunity to provide this submission to the Social Policy Committee on its inquiry into international student accommodation in NSW.

The Property Council is the nation's peak representative of the property industry. Our members include the bulk of the state's major investors, owners and developers of office buildings, shopping centres, industrial parks, tourist accommodation and residential apartments and communities. We also represent the interests of a number of major tertiary institutions, including Macquarie University, University of Sydney, University of Technology Sydney, University of Western Sydney and the University of Wollongong.

We have noted the terms of reference and provide the following comments to inform the inquiry about a range of existing Government initiatives and policies which influence the supply of student housing.

- Student or university housing is not specifically defined in the context of the NSW planning system; student housing is typically characterised as a boarding house. As such, the delivery of student housing, whether on or off campus, does not receive any specific or dedicated incentives beyond those offered to boarding housing (see below).
- The *State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009* provides built form incentives to encourage the delivery of boarding houses. An issue has been experienced in the interpretation and application of the boarding house provisions under this SEPP which is making it difficult for proponents to leverage these. This issue, which pertains to whether boarding housing constitutes new 'affordable rental accommodation', needs to be clarified to ensure new boarding house proposals can precede and, consequently, utilise the SEPP's incentive provisions.
- The Minister for Planning recently convened an Affordable Housing Taskforce to provide advice on a new SEPP which will ultimately replace the existing Affordable Housing SEPP. The Property Council is urging the NSW Government to retain the existing, or similar/extended, incentive provisions to facilitate the supply of new boarding accommodation for students both on and off-campus.

The ***Voice*** of Leadership

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- If it meets defined criteria, a boarding house can also be deemed a residential flat building under *SEPP 65 – Design Quality of Residential Flat Development*. This means that a boarding house needs to demonstrate adherence to a range of design principles. This has associated time and cost implications on the design and development of boarding accommodation. Consideration should be given as to whether SEPP 65 compliance should be necessary for boarding houses which are used for student accommodation and, for example, are within the boundary of a university.
- A 2010 discussion paper on possible changes to the *State Environmental Planning Policy (Infrastructure) 2007* proposed the adoption of a definition of ‘University Student House’ and an associated complying development regime which would allow for accommodation provided within the boundary of a university to be assessed as complying development. These proposals have yet to be progressed. The Property Council would support these recommendations being implemented to facilitate the increased supply of ‘University Student Housing’.
- Students also seek housing on the private rental market. The concerns identified by the Premier in requesting the Social Policy Committee to undertake this inquiry, specifically the availability of affordable accommodation for students and the perceived increased in illegal student housing, are symptomatic of a broader housing supply issue being experienced across NSW.

These comments are provided to give the Committee context as to the broader activities within Government with respect to student housing.

Please don't hesitate to contact me on 9033 1906 have any questions regarding the content of this submission.

Yours sincerely

Glenn Byres
NSW Executive Director