

Submission

No 69

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT ACCOMMODATION IN NEW SOUTH WALES

Organisation: Warringah Council
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Position: Acting Director Strategic & Development
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Social Policy Committee of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament of New South Wales
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Dear Chair

Re: Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in New South Wales

Warringah Council has reviewed the Private Members Bill, Member for Ryde (Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Boarding Houses) Bill 2010) and the 'Terms of Reference' for this inquiry and would like to make the following comments based on the experiences of Council in relation to this matter.

Council fully support the Minister's objectives to expand the powers of authorised officers to conduct investigations, in relation to boarding houses, expediently to ensure the safety of occupants.

The Warringah LGA is not believed to have a particular high demand for affordable student accommodation, given its relative location to major education establishments and transport factors.

However, Council would draw the Committee's attention to the ability of smaller boarding houses to be able to be classified as class 1b under the Building Code of Australia. Council would suggest that all boarding houses irrespective of size should be compliant with the requirements, under the Building Code of Australia, for a class 3 building, to ensure a reasonable provision for fire safety.

Council would also respectfully submit that in conjunction with the reforms proposed under the Private Members Bill (Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment (Boarding Houses) Bill 2010) that the powers also be broadened to allow officers to require relevant information, records and/or documentation. Currently the onus is on Councils to gather the evidence to demonstrate any non compliance. In this regard the definitions can be vague and require proof of payments and/or relationships between parties. In these situations officers are often attempting to extract information from persons who have an interest in ensuring that the potential unauthorised use is continued.

If you require additional information on this matter, please contact Michael Davies, Co-ordinator Development & Compliance Services on 9942 2111 or via council@warringah.nsw.gov.au

Yours faithfully

David Kerr
Acting Director Strategic & Development