

**Submission
No 81**

**INQUIRY INTO SOCIAL, PUBLIC AND AFFORDABLE
HOUSING**

Organisation: Bankstown City Council

Date received: 28/02/2014

14 February 2014

The Director
Select Committee on Social, Public and Affordable Housing
Parliament House
Macquarie St
Sydney NSW 2000

To The Director,

RE: NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into Social, Public and Affordable Housing.

Bankstown City Council recognises that enhancing housing affordability within a given area is a complex issue as there are various groups in the community who need affordable housing to buy or rent.

At present, the City of Bankstown is identified as an affordable location for home buyers and private renters compared to the high purchase and rental values in areas closer to the Sydney CBD. While this is a strength, the demographic analysis indicates there are certain groups in the City of Bankstown that will continue to require affordable housing in the future. These include lone person households, and workers who are unskilled or semi-skilled (such as technicians and trades workers, machinery operators and drivers and labourers).

In terms of possible planning law changes and reform to address this issue:

Firstly, Council and the community do not support the 'one-size fits all' approach adopted by the SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009.

At present, Council does not permit boarding houses and infill affordable housing (in the form of home units and townhouses) in the low density residential areas, which are typically made up of single and two storey houses.

However, the SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 is mandating the development of boarding houses and infill affordable housing in the low density residential areas as a way to provide affordable housing. Based on recent experience, these development types are not compatible with the prevailing suburban character and amenity of the low density neighbourhood areas.

Council's preferred approach is to replace the SEPP (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 with the Department of Planning & Infrastructure's Affordable Housing Taskforce.

In May 2011, the Department of Planning & Infrastructure announced that it would set up an Affordable Housing Taskforce. This Taskforce will work with local councils to develop Affordable Housing Choice Strategies that reflect their local housing needs and development characteristics. This is the preferred mechanism to review appropriate locations for affordable housing to justify any changes to the current policy and development controls.

Secondly, Council supports the revitalisation of residential parks (also known as housing estates).

Council recently adopted the North West Local Area Plan in consultation with the Department of Housing. The Local Area Plan sets out the vision for the North West Local Area (which includes the suburbs of Chester Hill, Sefton, Bass Hill and Villawood), specifies the best ways to accommodate residential and employment growth, and outlines the delivery of supporting infrastructure, facilities and open space.

A specific action is to encourage opportunities for the renewal of the Villawood East Housing Estate. There is merit in providing new development around key assets (such as community facilities) to modernise the supply of affordable housing and provide opportunities for people to live close to services and facilities. The Department of Housing is exploring options to fund the implementation of this action.

Yours sincerely,

Matthew Stewart
General Manager