

INQUIRY INTO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Organisation: Housing Now!

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18 March 2024

Portfolio Committee No. 7 – Planning and Environment
NSW Parliament
Macquarie Street
Sydney NSW 2000

**RE: NSW PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY INTO THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE
TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Dear Committee,

I am writing to you on behalf of the Housing Now!, an unlikely alliance of organisations that are committed to advocating for affordable and accessible housing solutions across NSW.

As the Chair of the Alliance, I am acutely aware of the challenges our community faces regarding housing affordability and accessibility. It is within this context that I wish to express our strong support for the NSW Government's initiative to develop a Transport Oriented Development (TOD) Program, particularly focusing on increasing housing opportunities around major transport centres across Greater Sydney.

Our support for the TOD Program is predicated on the belief that well-planned, high-density housing developments around transport hubs can significantly alleviate many of the housing challenges that Greater Sydney faces. Such developments not only provide an efficient use of scarce land resources but also offer residents improved access to public transport, reducing reliance on private vehicles and thereby contributing to environmental sustainability.

The integration of residential developments with public transport infrastructure has the potential to enhance economic opportunities for residents by providing easier access to employment centres. This approach aligns perfectly with our vision of creating vibrant, sustainable, and inclusive communities where more people can have access to affordable housing and quality public amenities.

However, to realise the full benefits of TODs, it is crucial that the program is underpinned by policies that prioritise affordability, inclusivity, and sustainability. It is in this vein that we have attached our policy platform, which outlines key recommendations to ensure that TOD initiatives meet the diverse needs of our communities. Our policy platform emphasises the

importance of incorporating affordable housing targets, streamlining planning approval processes, and improving local amenity and quality of housing.

We urge the Inquiry to consider our recommendations in the development of the TOD Program. It is our belief that with careful planning and a commitment to social equity, the TOD Program can serve as a catalyst for addressing the housing crisis in Greater Sydney while promoting sustainable urban development.

We look forward to the opportunity to discuss our recommendations further and are eager to contribute to the success of the TOD Program. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require further information or wish to engage in more detailed discussions on this matter.

Yours sincerely,

David Borger
Chair, Housing Now!

Housing Now! is an alliance between:





**HOUSING
NOW!**



HOUSING NOW!

Policy Platform
March 2024





Everybody deserves a place to call home but in NSW we faced with a housing crisis that threatens this basic, very human expectation.

The Australian quarter acre block was once a rite of passage for households across NSW, but for many people, this dream is no longer achievable, or desired.

Our Alliance of unlikely bedfellows has formed to magnify the voice of community and industry and help the NSW Government tackle a profoundly important challenge for our time – a roof over the heads of every person that calls NSW home.

The time has come to eliminate obstacles to housing growth, bury the NIMBY culture that pulls up the ladder from the grasp of future generations, and apply innovative thinking to drive the reform and housing delivery outcomes our state needs. We are at risk of making NSW less competitive, and less just, if we do not address this historic problem while we take the important step of increasing skilled migration into our state.

The housing crisis presents a policy challenge of extraordinary urgency, and demands bold political, community and industry leadership.

Our Alliance stands ready to support the NSW Government in its partnership with the Commonwealth to deliver the million homes vision via the Housing Future Fund. To do this, the NSW Government needs to urgently act to explore the following solutions to the current housing crisis.

David Borger –
Chair, Housing Now!

**BUSINESS
NSW**



**SYDNEY
YIMBY**



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Actions needed



Clear the Backlog - Now

It's time to look at the books and get things moving. Identify and prioritise planning proposals that are already in the system to ensure supply uplift can begin immediately. Some proposals are taking up to a staggering 7 years to get through the system – not good enough. We need to reduce approval timelines significantly and quickly.



Housing by Transport Links

Rezoning need to be prioritised and timelines shortened, particularly where they are around train stations and corridors. A template approach to rezonings around transport nodes, including Sydney Metro and Train Stations along with increased density around Light rail stops will fast-track housing delivery.

Housing supply that is close to where people work across Sydney is key to seeing our city continue to grow and increase its productivity. This is also one of the most carbon friendly things to do for the environment by boosting public transport use.



Inclusionary Zoning & Affordable Housing

That 1 in 5 homes built as part of the government's 'priorities precincts' are affordable for our healthcare workers, teachers, police officers, child-care workers, retail workers and other essential workers.

This means these significantly up-zoned areas will contribute 20% affordable housing, operated by community housing providers, in perpetuity.

To ensure these homes get built, it must be feasible for Developers to make a fair return. This can only happen if the ambition of the rezonings matches the ambition of significantly increasing affordable housing in our city. Initial feasibility testing shows this is likely to mean increasing the zoning for housing on sites by at least three times.

We should be quickly rolling this model of density done well out across as many train and metro stations as possible across the Greater Sydney network in order to deliver housing abundance. Affordable housing is linked to market rates – to keep it affordable, we must also address the ever-increasing cost of rent in Sydney. We can only achieve this by building enough homes to meet our city's needs, in places of great accessibility to jobs, open space, public transport and town centres.



Technology and Innovation

Technology that can reduce the cost of housing at speed through the modularisation of building components should be pursued. Design for Manufacture and Assembly (DfMA) is used widely across the world and in other states of Australia. High quality housing, at scale, with speed.





Back to the Future with a Design Pattern Book

Many of the world's greatest cities were designed using design pattern books – including ours. The Federation houses of Haberfield, the terraces of Paddington, and the art deco apartment buildings of Coogee – all pattern book designs. Let's build design trust in the broader community by commissioning a modern pattern book with a suite of approved designs by recognised architects developed in partnership with local neighbourhoods.

A pattern book will boost infill development and target the missing middle by growing the supply of townhouses, terraces, dual-occupancies, and small residential flat buildings across the R2 and R3 zones.



Amenity and Green Space

We call on government, developers and councils to prioritise well planned quality green space and amenity in and around new developments. Housing Now supports quality development, not merely quantity. These precincts need to foster thriving and cohesive urban communities through thoughtful design.

Beyond their aesthetic appeal, green spaces clean the air and serve as gathering spaces, encouraging social interaction and community and essential for creating a sense of belonging. Good design also helps support biodiversity and mitigates against the urban heat island effect.



Council Incentives

It's all very well to point the finger at council for insufficient housing delivery – but it doesn't get us anywhere. It's time for the NSW Government to stump up and incentivise councils financially to overdeliver on their housing targets. Additional funds will allow councils to better fund local infrastructure that can be tied to the provision of amenity to support new housing developments – think parks, pools, and community facilities.



Planning System Reform

There is a strong need for systemic reform to the planning system. The system now takes far too long to navigate, it is overly burdensome and creates uncertainty for developers and community alike. All of this flows through as additional cost added to the purchase price of a new home. A developer holding land for seven years waiting for a DA incurs significant holding costs which they must recover.

Artificial intelligence also has a role to play in reducing the processing times for development applications, especially for the less complex residential developments.

Help us tackle Housing Now!

Sign up for updates to our campaign.

housingnow.com.au





Contact

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