

**Submission
No 78**

INQUIRY INTO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Organisation: Pittwater Community Alliance

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Pittwater Community Alliance

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Objection to EIE Changes to create Low & Mid-rise Housing

Pittwater Community Alliance (PCA) is a group of 14 major resident & community associations in Pittwater (Warriewood through to Palm Beach). PCA exists to represent the interests of all community residents and to preserve & protect the unique environment of Pittwater.

The proposed changes don't consider Pittwater's environmental context, hazards, existing built form and constrained capacity of urban infrastructure, human resources, roads and public transport.

There is insufficient justification for these changes: While the 'housing crisis' is acknowledged; no analysis has been provided to justify the detailed changes proposed and no estimates of the additional population likely to result has been provided.

The proposed changes, if implemented, conflict with and undermine Council's local strategies & community involvement with the development of those strategies such as the recently adopted 'Tree Canopy Plan', 'The Local Housing Strategy', 'Councils Local Strategic Planning Statement' and the State 'North District Plan'.

There is inadequate public transport with Pittwater most commuters required to change buses to get to the city. The recently cancelled funding to complete the Mona Vale Road upgrade and the cancellation of the Beaches Link Tunnel under Middle Harbour is further evidence of the lack of infrastructure planning to accommodate these proposals. The sewerage system in the Pittwater area is already at capacity so what plans are in place to overcome this and who will pay and at what cost.

With respect to Mona Vale, we believe these proposals will negate a lot of work already done on the balanced development of the Mona Vale precinct by Northern Beaches Council and the community and this work should be supported and not discarded.

The impact on local government and its reduced representative power base as it pertains to housing and development is dramatic and unjustified. In addition, it has a serious flow-on effect in all other matters of Council Business, such as:

- development of new LEP/DCP's,
- disempowerment of local Councils/Government in representing its residents, businesses and rate payers,
- reduction of and increased costs of acquiring green space for use to maintain health and wellbeing,
- protection of the canopy to reduce carbon emissions and reduce land clearing,
- protection of wildlife corridors,
- protection and provision of appropriate infrastructure to suit the local topography,

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- design and aspirations, of our coastal communities,
- acknowledgement of hazards particular to localities,
- acknowledgement of already established place-based planning strategy.
- Possible destruction of heritage areas and buildings

For those E1 zones which have an R3 zone in their immediate vicinity, 21m height is too high – The E1 zones will have nothing higher than 3-stories, and many are only 2. Lifting the height control on shop-top housing will not produce significantly many more housing units but will produce darker, windier, less attractive local centres for no significant gain. Again social amenity and quality of life have not been considered and these are permanent changes so there is no going back if they are adopted as they are.

It is understood why the Government would wish to adopt such a broad-brush approach to the housing problem but it has significant downsides and it fails to make good use of local knowledge possessed by Councils – it is critically important that the Government and Department find a way of working with Councils and using their skills, rather than trying to impose hasty solutions on the Six Cities. After all, once an area is destroyed by inappropriate development it remains a symbol of bad planning and those who made the decisions.

Given these considerations it is our view that any acceptable planning proposal for higher density development should clearly articulate a role for local councils in engaging with their communities in setting targets and local planning controls consistent with both government and community expectations. Engaging the community is vital if these reforms are to be successful in reducing the housing shortage on the Northern Beaches.

Gavin Butler
Chairman