

Submission
No 161

**INQUIRY INTO DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRANSPORT
ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM**

Name: Name suppressed

Date Received: 28 March 2024

Partially
Confidential

Dear Legislative Council,

I object to the housing reform proposal in their current form. Whilst we recognise the need for more housing to be built in well located areas, planning and building more homes in established suburbs is far more complex and sensitive than to just place simple 400m bubbles on a map.

I am a young person who intends to one day purchase a property in the Sydney market. However I understand that simply building more housing will not necessarily have much of an impact on affordability. There are plenty of other factors at play (negative gearing etc). As a young person I want to see the built and ecological heritage of my city preserved and the wonderful individuality that each suburb in Sydney brings. This housing reform will simply lead to poor unintended outcomes: I fear it will eventually lead to the destruction of character and liveability of our most loved suburbs. Much like the original plans for the Rocks, Potts Point, Surry Hills, where there were high density proposals during 1960-70's to demolish these suburbs that were once seen as slums.

The state government should stand by its promise to work alongside local councils and community members to ensure the best outcomes for all. Most, if not all councils have a strategic master plan in place to accommodate new growth - why can't this simply be expanded with the new federal housing targets? I am sure councils will respond accordingly. To simply override this is insulting to the community and hard work of the elected local government.

The proposal in its current form does not consider each individual suburb, it's characteristics, built heritage or ecological sensitivity. The impact on the built heritage of Sydney will be devastating, we must give Heritage Conservation Areas and Heritage Listed Buildings an opportunity to grow and evolve with the city, not simply be wiped out. Preservation of historic precincts and suburbs is key to a healthy global city, it offers a diverse range of housing types and is imperative in maintaining a sense of belonging to our well loved city. Heritage Conservation Areas should be exempt where possible, Sydneysiders have worked hard for decades to maintain these special buildings. We cannot simply gift these areas to developers.

The pressure on current infrastructure in these established suburbs, schools, hospitals and roads has not been considered in this proposed housing reform. Where is the data to show we can support this dramatic increase in population? In the Eastern Suburbs alone, all of the local schools are at full capacity with waiting lists. I would think NSW planning would rightfully start a discussion with existing schools to understand scope for growth and expansion where possible before building thousands of new dwellings all over.

Good planning is more than just building new homes around transport stations. Foolish to think that all these new apartment dwellers will solely rely on public transport. The reality is they will also require the use of a car. Sydney is still a very car centric city. If the government is serious about introducing more affordable and social housing, there needs to be more action from the government itself to construct these new homes. We cannot rely on or trust developers to do so. Affordable housing for 15 years is only temporary, this needs to be permanent. Developers will take advantage of this as a strategy to gain approvals for increase in height and FSR to generate more profit.

It is worth noting developers are a business, they exist to make a profit. As such, developers need to be regulated, the 'cutting of red tape' is dangerous, as we have seen often leads to very poor building quality (Mascot Towers), with little to no consequences for the developer. It is important that there are stringent policies and regulations in place to ensure the community is receiving well designed and high quality housing stock. I urge the NSW planning department to work with the local councils and community members on adjusting these reforms to ensure the best possible outcome and legacy for Sydneysiders now and future. Sydneysiders deserve a healthy increase in density without compromising what makes Sydney so desirable and liveable. I am sure Jack Mundy would have some things to say about this proposal.

I am not against new development. It can be done well and enhance the existing character. Below is a fantastic example in Broadway, Sydney City. This is an outcome more likely to occur when local council and community members are involved. I would love to see more of this type of sensitive gentle density more throughout Sydney.



*Contemporary 4 story medium density development sits seamlessly between two heritage buildings. Positive outcome.
Photo source: Authors Own.*