

New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association

November 2016

The New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association (NSWNMA) is the registered union for all nurses and midwives in New South Wales. The membership of the NSWNMA comprises all those who perform nursing and midwifery work. This includes assistants in nursing (who are unregulated), enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives at all levels including management and education.

The NSWNMA has approximately 62,500 members and is affiliated to Unions NSW and the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). Eligible members of the NSWNMA are also deemed to be members of the New South Wales Branch of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation.

Our role is to protect and advance the interests of nurses and midwives and the nursing and midwifery professions. We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by our members in preparing our comments.

We welcome the opportunity to provide a brief response to the review of the Master Plan 2030 for Sydney Olympic Park. This response is authorised by the elected officers of the New South Wales Nurses and Midwives' Association

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brett Holmes". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

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The Association wishes to address the provision of affordable housing at Sydney Olympic Park. As indicated in the August 2016 Planning Report, residential dwellings are expected to increase from 6 350 to 10 700 at Sydney Olympic Parkⁱ. The Association recognises that suitable, secure and affordable housing is fundamental to the health of all Australiansⁱⁱ. We request that the current target of 3 percent affordable housing is reconsidered and increased. We also request key workers, including nurses, midwives and aged care workers are included in eligibility criteria for affordable housing when their household income is not sufficient to pay market rent within a reasonable proximity to their workplace.

At present, Sydney is the least affordable city for key workers to live; the median house price to earnings ratio for a key worker is 8.3 timesⁱⁱⁱ. The increasing cost of housing is a concern for our members that live and work in metropolitan, regional and rural areas. The Association requests that planning address the need for affordable housing for all essential workers^{iv}. Sydney Olympic Park is well situated to many hospitals including Concord, Westmead, Ryde, St John of God Burwood and Auburn hospitals and many aged care facilities. Increasing the percentage of affordable housing in the Master Plan will greatly assist assistants in nursing, enrolled nurses, registered nurses and midwives and other key workers to live in the communities where they provide essential services.

The NSWNMA considers that it is in society's best interest to ensure nurses and midwives are available to provide nursing and midwifery care for future health service delivery. Our members, particularly those who are early in their career or those supporting a family, have consistently reported the difficulty they face securing appropriate, safe, affordable accommodation close to their workplace. The following comments are examples of responses from a recent survey of our members on affordable housing

- *We can't even afford a small home in the outer suburbs of Sydney. We are moving to Melbourne so we have a chance of being able to live within an hour commute of work.*
- *As a single Enrolled Nurse earning \$29 an hr (thereafter) I am spending almost half my wage on rent and I live in a rural area so I can't imagine how those in city areas manage.*
- *I am paying \$350 for a room in a share house and could not afford to rent a house by myself let alone buy.*
- *I moved from Newcastle to Sydney with my partner. Rent dictated which hospitals I applied to in Sydney as I could not afford to live close to the city. Even living in Western Sydney costs \$500 per week. I am aware of colleagues who have resigned from inner city hospitals because they can no longer afford to live nearby.*

Limited affordable housing does and will cause nurses and midwives to move further away from the hospitals and services they work causing difficulties recruiting and

retaining staff. Over 25% of members that work at Westmead Hospital live in excess of 30 km from their workplace.

Sydney Olympic Park Master Plan 2030 aims to ensure that the Park continues to evolve into an active, vibrant suburb in Sydney. To achieve this it is important that Olympic Park has diversity in the residents who live at the Park. Increasing the percentage of affordable housing will assist to ensure that Sydney Olympic Park continues to develop into a diverse community. The Association requests that the Master Plan 2030 for Sydney Olympic Park reconsiders and increases the current affordable housing target. We also request that key workers are included in eligibility criteria for affordable housing at Sydney Olympic Park.

ⁱ Department of Planning & Environment 2016, *Sydney Olympic Park review of master plan 2030 and state significant precinct: planning report*, NSW Government, Sydney

ⁱⁱ Australian Institute of Health and Welfare 2016, *Housing assistance in Australia 2016*, viewed 7 November 2016, <http://www.aihw.gov.au/housing-assistance/haa/2016/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Crawford, T. 2011, *3rd Key worker housing affordability report*, Bankwest Financial Indicator Series.

^{iv} NSW Nurses and Midwives Association 2016, *Position statement on affordable housing*, Waterloo.