

The Disability Trust Response to the Draft Affordable Housing SEPP 70 review

About our organisation

The Disability Trust operates from Southern Sydney to the Victorian border with a focus on support services for people with physical disabilities, people with intellectual disabilities and people with mental health conditions or psychosocial disability. We are aware of the significant disadvantage experienced by these people in accessing affordable housing. As a separate wing to our company we are a Tier 3 Registered Housing Provider offering affordable housing predominantly to this cohort

Our position on the proposed changes to SEPP 70

- Our organisation supports the proposed inclusion of five additional Councils in State Environmental Planning Policy no. 70

Why do we need more affordable rental housing?

On a typical day in April 2017, of 13,447 advertised rental properties across Greater Sydney only 625 were affordable to households earning a minimum wage.¹

Our organisation sees working families in housing stress who are struggling to keep housing connections to the places where they live or work.

Affordable rental housing is essential infrastructure and is critical to strong, diverse and livable communities. Well-located affordable rental housing means that people in lower paid jobs can live in the communities that they work in

The needs analysis undertaken by Randwick City, Inner West, Northern Beaches, City of Ryde and City of Canada Bay clearly demonstrate the need for more affordable housing within their respective local government areas.

SEPP 70 as a mechanism for increasing supply of affordable rental housing

Our organisation supports the proposed inclusion of additional Councils in SEPP 70. The experience in the City of Sydney and Willoughby City Council areas shows that including more Councils in SEPP 70 provisions will:

- deliver moderate increases in the supply of affordable rental housing supply in those areas
- not affect the viability of new housing supply developments in those areas
- provide certainty for landowners, developers and the community about the requirements around affordable rental housing contributions in developments in those areas
- remove the need to rely on Voluntary Planning Agreements which have had a very limited impact on affordable rental housing supply and are opaque

Broadening the provisions of SEPP 70 further

Working with local communities, our organisation sees the need for affordable rental housing every day and we would expect that many more local Councils could demonstrate need for more affordable rental housing in their areas. Our organisation hopes that the process of extending the provisions of SEPP 70 to five additional Councils will be a trigger for other Councils, where there is need for affordable rental housing, to make applications for inclusion.

The development of clear guidelines to support Councils through this application process, establishing a consistent process for quantifying need, would be a welcome step.

Developing affordable housing contribution schemes

Our organisation would welcome engagement with the local Councils proposed for inclusion in the provisions of SEPP 70 as they develop affordable housing contribution schemes.

The design of contribution schemes can have a significant impact on how effectively they turn developer contributions into affordable rental housing units. Well-designed contribution schemes which respond to local housing market conditions can mean that registered community housing providers are able to maximise the affordable rental housing that schemes deliver.