

SAVE Marrickville



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Save Marrickville Resident Groups Submission to the Department of Planning's SEPP 70 Affordable Housing 31/01/2018

The Save Marrickville resident group represents over 500 direct members from the Inner West. We welcome the opportunity to make a submission on Affordable Housing to the Department of Planning.

The Save Marrickville Resident Group has 5 main priorities for the Marrickville / Inner West area:

1. Sympathetic development and density
2. Local council and community control
3. Heritage and local character preserved
4. Industrial lands and employment preserved
5. Infrastructure planned first – including Affordable Housing Targets

The Save Marrickville Group has significant concerns about the overdevelopment of the Inner West. Particularly the aims of the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban renewal plan, specifically rezoning of land along the corridor and proposal for a short-term housing target of 5,900 dwellings between 2016 & 2021 for the inner West Council area. We are particularly concerned about the level of density being forced upon the Inner West, the lack of specific and active planning around infrastructure, the risk this brings to our heritage, the character and diversity of our suburbs and the lack of appropriate Affordable Housing.

Marrickville and the broader Inner West requires affordable housing and this should be identified and included in the State Environment Planning Policy No 70 – Affordable Housing Legislation.

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The Inner West has a long history of having socially diverse, mixed, culturally rich communities which have contributed greatly to the cohesion and desirability of this area. It is these qualities that have attracted a wealthier demographic to the Inner West and which now threaten to squeeze out the very reason people come to live here. We fear that 'urban renewal' will price many people (particularly those that rent) out of our suburb and close down affordable housing options for them. Increasing supply of high-rise housing does not necessarily improve affordability or housing choice. Legal mechanisms to ensure the more vulnerable in our society are protected is required.

The Inner West has been earmarked to have a creative hub and currently already has a rich industrial and creative industry sector which has grown organically over many years, particularly in the Carrington Road District. It goes without saying that those employed in these industries are often in the moderate to low category of income and require affordable housing. This area and the local surrounds are under immense pressure from developers and the need for councils to have Affordable Housing targets and legislation that underpins this is needed now more than ever.

We think it important to note that providing affordable housing should not justify building more stories on medium or high-rise buildings. There are already grave inconsistencies with proposed transition edges in Marrickville where 8 story apartment buildings are being proposed to butt up against single story dwellings (South Marrickville in particular). Affordable Housing should be automatically built into the planning process and should be at least 30% of any new development. The old hospital site in Marrickville has only designated 9 units out of 221 as 'affordable' (4%). This is not nearly high enough. Affordable housing brings employment opportunities, improved health outcomes, reduced homelessness, diversity and community cohesiveness. What message are we sending to those in our community who care for our most vulnerable, serve us our meals and care for our children? *"You are welcome to service our community but you must travel 2 hours a day for the privilege?"*. Australia is one of the wealthiest and most expensive cities in the world to live in. We pride ourselves on being an egalitarian community who gives everyone a 'fair go'. Where are these values in our affordable housing targets? Housing is at the heart of our individual and societal wellbeing.

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Marrickville has a high number of people living in low rental accommodation including boarding houses. Many of these low-cost options (particularly along the Sydenham to Bankstown corridor) will be demolished to make way for expensive units. We require a social impact statement to determine who will be affected by rezoning and then a comprehensive plan to ensure these people are not displaced. Many of these people have been long term residents to the Inner West and have built invaluable social networks. Destroying this will have significant social and emotional consequences on them as individuals and to our community as a whole. Minimum targets for low cost housing must be set and be available to people in a range of situations including individuals, families and the elderly or disabled.

The Inner West is very close to the CBD and plays a role in servicing the cultural and artistic vibrancy of our city. For those who work in these services, it is imperative that they are able to afford to also live in the area. The Greater Sydney Commission speaks of the importance of accessing goods and services in your local community which cannot be done if the zoning and other laws favour high end residential living only. The GSC also promotes the need to support a diverse range of small businesses including the creative industries. It notes that Marrickville plays an important role as one of the largest employers of industrial and urban services. This is also supported by the recent '[Made In Marrickville](http://www.urbanculturalpolicy.com)' Report www.urbanculturalpolicy.com We must ensure that those who work in these important industries can live close to their work. This contributes to social equity, cohesion and diversity. The Inner West Council must be included in the SEPP 70 to ensure appropriate affordable housing is planned for.

Councils must be able to capture a share of unearned land value uplift arising from the planning and development approvals process. The ongoing gentrification of our suburbs and the apparent failure of the market to replace housing for lower income residents is a travesty that Governments have a responsibility to address. Assessments on what the community has, needs and could potentially lose must be independently investigated and assessed. Coordination of local infrastructure needs by council and residents must occur early and master planning be put in place. 50% of land value uplift should be captured to contribute to public benefit (including affordable housing). When land is rezoned or planning controls varied, affordable housing requirements should be applied in a consistent way and developers should not be able to "negotiate" around the controls.

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In other global cities urban requirements include capture of 50% of land value uplift as contribution towards public benefits (including affordable housing) in renewal areas rather than the value being directed to a few fortunate landowners.

Affordable housing should apply to all new developments, not just medium and high rise. Affordable rental houses should also be for perpetuity. The purchasing of houses or units by overseas investors should not put the local community at a disadvantage when trying to enter into the housing market. It is of grave concern that many of the units in Sydney have been purchased by overseas investors and sit vacant – therefore contributing to the housing availability crisis. Mechanisms such as higher tax requirements or triple rate payments should be applied to unoccupied properties and units put back into the market.

Changes need to occur as soon as possible so that councils can develop policies that will be incorporated in LEP's and Development Controls in order to have transparency and consistency in order to alleviate Sydney's housing affordability crisis.

The low 5% affordable housing target in The District GSC Plan is inadequate considering that housing diversity, choice and affordable supply is fundamental to urban renewal in global cities around the world.

The only way to achieve affordable housing, that will address the immediate housing and homelessness crisis will be to mandate a much higher component of all residential development as affordable. Rates of 10-50% are used in other global cities' urban renewal plans.

15% has been mandated as the Inner West Council recommendation for large developments, however 30 % would be even more equitable and a building should not need to be 15 storeys before affordable housing is provided.

Developers are pushing up prices in their quest to land bank, making it harder for families and first home buyers to purchase properties in this area and the issue of affordable

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housing and the provision of social housing needs to be addressed, particularly when there are hundreds of people living with a disability in Marrickville alone. We also want to see our aged who have lived in Marrickville for decades, remain here.

Including the Inner West (and more broadly, other priority precincts or urban renewal areas) in the SEPP 70 will assist in ensuring there is a consistent approach to providing affordable housing making requirements clear to landowners and proponents early in the planning and development process. Affordable Housing Policies and Plans need to be incorporated into Council's LEP.

Thank you for providing us with this opportunity to comment. Please contact us via our email if you would like to discuss any of the points we have raised further.