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Draft amendment to parking provisions for boarding houses; ARHSEPP

The Australian Housing Initiative was set up to respond to the current housing crisis and work to ensure there is sufficient safe, affordable and secure housing and bringing back the genuine connection of community by providing elegant housing diversification and would like to take the opportunity to respond to the proposed amendments to the car parking standards for boarding houses.

Our major concern would be of any changes being made that are based on a political agenda rather than on the results of actual research.

We would like to suggest that a study be made of the complaints register of all New Generation Boarding Houses to ascertain whether any complaints have actually been substantiated and followed through. Part of this study would also include owners, managers and residents of New Generation Boarding Houses as well as residents in the immediate area, noting that any survey must account for and address reality as opposed to perception.

In our experience any complaints that have been made, have been motivated by neighbours who are wishing to cast a negative perception on the issues rather than what is actual reality.

Rather than a blanket change of parking requirements across all 7 Zones, the biggest issue seems to be related around the density of R2 Zoning to maintain the dwelling character

We feel that a better outcome would be to implement a minimum parking standard, maximum building size and a maximum number of residents within the dwelling of the R2 zone

Changes to that zoning may be better served by looking at outcomes that minimise over-development and over-population of sites in order to stay in line with the national Construction Code and a 1b building, with a limit to the available number of rooms on site.

In this zone, our suggestion would be to have a maximum of 6 double rooms with a maximum of 12 people and a maximum habitable area of 299 m2.

Having double rooms would mean that the car-parking requirement of 2 cars – 1 of these requiring to be disabled would be creating more than 3 car spots meaning that couples are more likely to take up the rooms. In this case, the likelihood of extra cars impacting local residents is minimal

For all other 6 zones, we do understand that these residents in particular would be closer to amenities and the number of car spots could be reduced. In saying this however, we are of the understanding that cars and the cost of cars are readily accessible and in which case, an increased parking allocation in areas not within the accessible zone is appropriate and to remain in it's current format- being .2 in accessible areas and .4 in non accessible areas.

In addition, we are not clear on the status of current applications in council and what the outcomes will be for those applications.

We would suggest that a start period for any changes be implemented with a 3 month amnesty on pending and future applications from the date of decision. This would protect any financial decisions made by those people that have purchased property to create affordable housing outcomes.

We understand completely that the changes involving parking have a requirement mainly around the perception and understanding of the local community and that boarding houses are places that attract low socio economic residents including bikies, criminals, drug users, paedophiles etc, even though this is far from the reality.

The creation of the Affordable Housing State Environmental Housing Policy in relation to New Generation Boarding Houses was a very smart and innovative move by the NSW Government in creating outcomes for cohorts that include employed young professionals, middle aged singles, 55 + single women and the elderly who are requiring a safe space at rents that are in alignment with the income they earn.

There have been no registered or public negative outcomes from stories of New Generation Boarding Houses creating the perception issues raised from local residents.

Most often the issues brought to the attention of local council, local elected members and State Government members is for an application of a New Generation Boarding House and this again is based on the above perceptions. The outcomes of those New Generation Boarding Houses that have been approved, overwhelmingly show that once in operation phase, the reality is that the tenants and the operations of the property create beneficial outcomes for locals and there are little to no complaints from the community that are substantiated by evidence of any issues.

By creating and encouraging these buildings in the R2 zone it gives the ability for children of the families in the local area to rent in the area that they have grown up and established relationships in, to meet a partner and save for their first home and begin their own family with grandparents close by who can look after the children.

If appropriate housing isn't available, the young person will need to move out of the area to somewhere cheaper where they will meet their new partner and start a family but won't have grandparents nearby. Most of the time this can mean that 60-80% of on the couple's wage will be taken up by the childcare costs.

We understand that the State Government does have an understanding of what we have expressed here.

In Summary

- Study of complaints register to assess substantiation of issues prior to decision of changes
- Additional study involving managers, owners, residents and neighbours of New Generation Boarding Houses to assess requirements
- Control over-development and over-population by having maximum of 6 double rooms, 12 people and area of 299 m2 within the dwelling of R2 zone

- Increase parking in non-accessible areas and maintain existing requirements
- Continue encouragement of New Generation Boarding Houses in the R2 zone to develop community and maintain connection
- 3 month amnesty on pending applications

We hope that further discussion will entail from this submission. We are very passionate about creating and maintaining affordable outcomes for those residents that benefit from the affordable, safe accommodation with high amenity that is provided through New Generation Boarding Houses.

I can be contacted on the details below and would look forward to talking further in relation to the above.

Regards

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