

Resolution of Council

11 March 2019

Item 13.4

State Environmental Planning Policy - Boarding Houses

Moved by Councillor Scott, seconded by Councillor Scully -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) that as of April 2015, less than one per cent of housing in the City of Sydney is affordable rental housing;
- (ii) The State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 (the SEPP) was introduced 'to increase the supply and diversity of affordable rental and social housing in NSW' and, as such, offers bonuses to developers for the construction of boarding houses in an effort to increase the supply of affordable rental housing;
- (iii) the outcome of more affordable rental housing being available to the market is not currently being achieved;
- (iv) in practical terms, the bonuses to developers for construction of boarding houses do not result in more affordable housing in our City, and instead often result in crowded living conditions, out of the financial reach of low- and middle-income earners without significant financial strain;
- (v) serious reform of the SEPP and intervention in the market is needed to ensure boarding house-style accommodation is truly affordable; and
- (vi) in August 2018, a motion was unanimously passed by Council calling on the City to advocate for changes to the SEPP in order to create more affordable housing;

- (B) Council advocate for changes to NSW planning law to abolish aspects of the SEPP that provide construction bonuses to developers for boarding house accommodation, while ensuring that local councils still have mechanisms by which to provide affordable housing in their local government areas; and
 - (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Premier, the Hon. Gladys Berejiklian MP; the NSW Minister for Housing, the Hon. Pru Goward MP and the NSW Minister for Planning, the Hon. Anthony Roberts MP; the NSW Leader of the Opposition, the Hon. Michael Daley MP and the NSW Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing, the Hon. Tania Mihailuk MP, expressing this view.
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Note – the motion above was not carried. The resolution below was carried –

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note:
 - (i) less than one per cent of housing in the City of Sydney is affordable rental housing and the rate of homelessness has risen 13 per cent since August 2018;
 - (ii) the State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009 (“the SEPP”) was introduced to facilitate the effective delivery of new affordable rental housing;
 - (iii) the SEPP offers floor space bonuses and amenity concessions for developers to encourage the construction of boarding houses throughout New South Wales;
 - (iv) evidence shows that student housing is competing with other forms of affordable housing in the City of Sydney with around 80 per cent of boarding rooms being used for student accommodation;
 - (v) traditional boarding rooms often absorb more than 30 per cent of a very low, low or moderate income household and therefore are not defined as ‘affordable’;
 - (vi) the ‘boarding houses’ provisions of the SEPP are stimulating very little affordable rental housing for low income households and therefore are failing to achieve their aim;
 - (vii) review and reform of the SEPP is required to ensure:
 - (a) that boarding house accommodation is affordable, accessible and diverse with financial constraints on the maximum rent that can be charged;
 - (b) that developer incentives are linked to the affordability of boarding rooms;
 - (c) that student accommodation is delivered under a separate planning policy designed to meet the needs of student housing;
 - (d) that there is an unambiguous and consistent definition of ‘affordable rental housing’;

- (e) that there is a greater nexus between development standards and the Apartment Design Guidelines (ADG) including solar access, cross ventilation and floor-to-ceiling heights;
 - (f) that there are clearer 'character' design guidelines in new boarding house developments;
 - (g) monitoring of dwelling outcomes in boarding house developments, including numbers, size, locations and affordability;
- (viii) in August 2008, a motion was unanimously passed by Council calling on the City to advocate for changes to the SEPP in order to create more affordable housing;
- (B) Council advocate for changes to the SEPP to ensure that the delivery of boarding houses results in a genuine affordable housing option for low income households and improved amenity; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Premier, the NSW Minister for Housing and the NSW Minister for Planning; the NSW Leader of the Opposition and the NSW Shadow Minister for Planning and Housing, expressing this view.

Carried unanimously.

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