

Item 14.11

Notices of Motion

Support for Boarding Houses in Sydney

By Councillor Ellsmore

It is resolved that:

- (A) Council note that:
- (i) traditional boarding houses continue to play an important role in providing relatively affordable housing in the City of Sydney, and in neighbouring Local Government Areas including the Inner West and Waverley. Traditional boarding houses tend to be established in older buildings with a long history of use as a boarding house, featuring small rooms and shared facilities;
 - (ii) in the City of Sydney there are an estimated 294 registered boarding houses with an estimated total of 4,031 rooms;
 - (iii) the number of traditional boarding houses are reducing over time, with development applications approved to convert 14 boarding houses to other housing since 2013, and the most recent City of Sydney Housing Audit 2023 finding that 64 boarding house rooms had been removed from the city's non-private dwelling stock in the twelve months to June 2023; and
 - (iv) in 2023, the City of Sydney Council refused two applications for boarding house conversions in Paddington. There is currently an appeal in the Land and Environment Court by the proponent in relation to the refusal by the City of Sydney of the Development Application to convert the boarding houses at 58-60 and 62-64 Selwyn Street Paddington into four dwellings. These boarding houses currently provide 32 rooms between them;
- (B) Council note that Council has been exploring opportunities to increase protections for traditional boarding houses;
- (C) Council note that:
- (i) although they are required to be registered, traditional boarding houses are not formally considered 'affordable housing', because there are no legal requirements that rooms be rented affordably. With Sydney rents at record highs, rising 13 per cent in one year alone, one of the key risks for traditional boarding house tenants is eviction as a result of unaffordable rent increases;
 - (ii) the Paddington Society is calling for an immediate moratorium on rent increases for boarding houses, to support boarding houses tenants, many of whom are older, on very low incomes, are living with a disability, and face few or no other housing options if evicted; and

- (iii) the Paddington Society is also calling on the City of Sydney to purchase boarding houses at risk of being lost using affordable housing developer contributions;
- (D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the NSW Minister for Housing and the NSW Rental Commissioner calling for the introduction of an immediate moratorium on rent increases for boarding houses; and
- (E) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:
 - (i) undertake an assessment of options for Council to protect boarding houses through direct purchase, either directly or in coordination with Community Housing Providers, including with the use of affordable housing contributions from development;
 - (ii) provide advice to Council about potential amendments to the Council's affordable housing contribution schemes to encourage permanent protection of boarding houses; and
 - (iii) provide advice to Council about whether there are further potential amendments to Council planning instruments to protect against the loss of boarding houses, including through specific provisions in relation to the draft no net dwelling loss/dwelling retention provisions which are due to go on exhibition later this year.

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