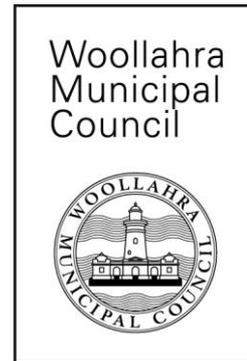


Media release

18 March 2024

Woollahra Council outraged over NSW Government's proposed planning changes that show no benefit to local community



Woollahra Council's submission opposing the NSW Government's proposed changes to planning for low and mid-rise housing highlights the Government's complete lack of regard for existing housing density, local character, heritage conservation and local planning controls.

"This is an appalling and hurried attempt at addressing the housing crisis and affordability with a one-size-fits-all approach that disregards everything we know about planning for a liveable community," Mayor of Woollahra Richard Shields said.

"It is ridiculous to expect local communities to just cop the scale of development density being proposed in areas that are already heavily congested, with no thought and funding commitment for what would be needed in terms of local or state infrastructure, including hospitals, schools, transport, roads, parks and open spaces."

As no evidence or economic justification has been provided to councils, Mayor Shields fears the worst urban design, overshadowing, bulk and scale outcomes for eastern suburbs town centres like Double Bay, Rose Bay and Edgecliff.

"It's completely understandable why most councils are fiercely opposing the proposed changes and there is a groundswell of distrust amongst residents learning of the Government's plans for Sydney and the devastating impact they will have on our communities if they proceed," the Mayor said.

For the Woollahra Local Government Area, some of the proposed planning changes include:

- Increase in height for apartments and mixed use development of up to 8 storeys within 400m of town centres and 6 storeys within 800m
- Local controls of bulk, scale, floor space ratio and setbacks would be disregarded
- New targets for landscaping and tree canopy planting requiring less than Council's current controls
- No guaranteed protection for heritage significant sites, conservation areas or environmentally sensitive land

"These proposed changes are a huge assault on our community and the way we live and to think that the Government believes they can just steamroll ahead with these changes with minimal consultation is offensive," Mayor Shields said.

"Woollahra Council exceeded the Government's five year housing target by 70% in 2022 and we are well on track to meet our 6-10 year target. If these changes go ahead we could see a 462% increase in floor space ratio and a 221% increase in building height in and around town centres in a municipality where we already have one of the highest housing densities in Australia, and that's just not something we can live with.

“If we don’t act on this now we are going to see change forced on us that will have a devastating impact on future generations.

“Here we have proposed changes that threaten the heritage and character of our area where strategic planning, good urban design and local tree canopy are traded for a quick political win. There is no community benefit here, not one.

“I understand that we need to respond to a housing shortage and cost of living and affordable housing are big issues at the moment, but density without infrastructure is completely irresponsible and changes of this magnitude should not proceed without proper consultation with councils and communities.”

Woollahra Council’s submission can be viewed at:

www.yoursay.woollahra.nsw.gov.au/housing

Local residents are encouraged to share their concerns and feedback with the State Government before it is too late and the changes are pushed through, by emailing:

lowandmidrisehousing@planning.nsw.gov.au and premier@dpc.nsw.gov.au.



Photomontage of Court Street in Double Bay illustrating the drastic nature of the NSW Government’s proposed planning changes

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