

Housing Advisory Committee

Date: 29 August 2023

Time: 6.00 pm – 7:30 pm

Venue: Queens Park Room, Council Chambers



Attended
<p>Members</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Paula Masselos (Chair) • Catherine Gilbert (via Microsoft Teams) • David Johnston • Elias McGrath • Gabriela Quintana Vigiola (via Microsoft Teams) • Mora Main • Ryan Van Den Nouwelant
<p>Apologies Received</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Sally Betts • Cr Elaine Keenan • Tim Sneesby
<p>Councillors</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cr Ludovico Fabiano (via Microsoft Teams)
<p>Council Officers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fletcher Rayner – Director, Planning, Sustainability and Compliance • George Bramis – Executive Manager, Urban Planning • Annette Trubenbach – Executive Manager, Community Programs • Leisa Simmons – Manager, Housing Programs and Community Support • Emma Rogerson – Senior Strategic Town Planner

Item	
Welcome, Apologies and Acknowledgement	The meeting commenced at 6pm. Mayor, Paula Masselos welcomed everyone to the meeting, and acknowledged the Bidjigal, Birrabirragal and Gadigal people, and paid respect to all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Elders both past and present and emerging.
Code of Conduct Declarations	No conflicts of interest were declared.
Introductions	All members and staff introduced themselves.
Sub-Regional Affordable Housing Collaboration Project	<p>Comments and questions from HAC members and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members supported the collaborative approach of this project and agreed there was a need to increase affordable housing in the Eastern Beaches. • Community Housing Providers (CHP's) are becoming increasingly selective about who they partner with as interest in producing affordable housing grows and they have more options to choose from. It is therefore important to make an attractive case, which could be achieved through investigating uplift opportunities and dedicating land at no or little cost. • Partnering with a CHP or private developer would be beneficial as Council does not have thorough development experience.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financing against rental income rather than the value of the land may avoid the need to dedicate Council land to a CHP. • 99-year leases can sometimes be effective as equivalents to land ownership for financing. • Consider offsetting the cost of low revenue by renting a percentage of the stock at market rates. • Strata schemes can be expensive so should be avoided. • 20-unit 100% social or affordable developments of the same tenure type are easiest to manage, however, a mix of affordable and market rate stock can assist to increase revenue. • Good tenancy and management is important to keep maintenance costs down. • Consider partnering with other organisations or groups (such as Church's) who own land in the LGA to increase opportunity sites. <p>Action: Send a progress update on this project to the next HAC meeting on 22 November 2023.</p>
<p>Proposed Subsidised Lease Affordable Housing Program</p>	<p>Comments and questions from HAC members and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members supported this is a good temporary and quick solution to offering social and affordable housing, however it was agreed that it should work in parallel to seeking to increase Council's stock. • Consider the estimations against 3-bedroom units, as there is a big need for these configurations in instances of domestic violence where women with children require emergency transitional housing that is adequately sized. • Investigate the likely impacts of a CHP managing the process. A CHP managing may incentivise landowners to participate as CHPs may have a good reputation, however, Council managing may be preferred as it does not appear so stereotypically 'affordable/social housing' for those who may associate such housing though CHPs with negativity. • Investigate whether the funds could go elsewhere rather than to private landlords and the private real estate market. The concern expressed was that rent in this model goes to private landlords and competing in private rental market contributes to rent price increases. • Alternatively, this model was also seen as a useful and quick approach to accommodating people in need (eg victims of domestic violence). <p>Action: Send a progress update on this project to the next HAC meeting on 22 November 2023.</p>
<p>Affordable Housing Tenancy Policy Amendments</p>	<p>Comments and questions from HAC members and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All members supported the intent of changes focusing on the needs of lower income earners, however, some raised the question of whether essential workers on slightly higher incomes but in roles that are harder to fill should also be targeted in order to fill those roles in the community? • Do not bother considering market rents, rather just cap the weekly rents at 30% of the resident's income. • Do not bother advertising available social or affordable housing on realestate.com etc. Go to CHPs who have waitlists instead to save money and resourcing otherwise required to publicly list properties. Could also consider going to employers of essential workers for lists of candidates if this route is going to be pursued.

	Action: Send the draft amendments to the HAC members for comment during public exhibition. Send a progress update on this project to the next HAC meeting on 22 November 2023.
Open discussion	<p>Comments and questions from HAC members and staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It would be useful to set social and affordable housing targets to better guide projects, policy and decision making. Figures would assist to understand whether moderate or drastic action is required. • The challenge of existing affordable or low-rental stock being demolished and replaced with luxury housing was noted. • There is opportunity to consider the cost and benefits of selling existing older social or affordable housing stock (buildings that are older than 20 years, which are likely to have higher maintenance fees compared to newer stock) and use the funds to increase the amount in the Program available for purchasing newer stock or contributing towards a sub-regional approach. • Consider increasing levies for properties used as AirBnB or which are empty.
Next Meeting	<p>The Chair thanked everyone for their contributions. Next meeting will be held on 22 November 2023.</p> <p>Meeting closed: 7.30pm.</p>