

Hornsby Shire Housing Strategy



Summary

The Hornsby Shire Housing Strategy identifies areas suitable for the provision of additional housing to assist meet Council's housing obligations into the future. The Strategy has been prepared in response to the State Government's Metropolitan Strategy and draft North Subregional Strategy.

Council received funding from the Department of Planning (DOP) to assist with the preparation of the Strategy and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which outlines the project plan and terms and conditions of the funding. The project scope for the Housing Strategy includes the identification of opportunities for an additional 2,600 dwellings over the next 10 years. The preparation of the Housing Strategy has been overseen by a Steering Committee comprised of all Councillors, the General Manager, Executive Managers, relevant Council staff, and DOP representatives.

A concentrated housing model has been adopted, with housing located in planned precincts rather than dispersed throughout urban areas. Experience has demonstrated that dispersed housing creates considerable uncertainty for both residents and developers and does not respect environmental or infrastructure constraints. The Housing Strategy rezonings will be implemented through Council's Comprehensive Local Environmental Plan (LEP), which is due to be completed by 2011.

To ensure a sound basis for the development of the Housing Strategy, a team of demographers and housing analysts were engaged to provide advice on housing trends, needs and demands. This advice included how households are changing and what types of housing should be provided to meet the needs of the future population. The demographers found that Council needs to continue to provide housing choice in the form of multi-unit housing, to assist older persons to downsize and young couples to enter the property market. To assist understanding of housing affordability, a market analysis prepared by the Department of Housing was reviewed, which identifies that Council should provide multi-unit housing in locations which currently lack this form of housing to provide choice and affordability.

Existing planning controls and policies were reviewed to determine their effectiveness in permitting appropriate forms of housing to meet the future needs of the population. The built form resulting from Council's existing planning controls was also examined. It was found that, notwithstanding height, satisfaction with built form in

existing precincts was dependent on the amount and quality of landscaping, building separation, and underground car parking.

To select locations for multi-unit housing, centres suitable for increased densities were identified. The identification of suitable centres was based on locational criteria formulated from the 1998 Housing Strategy, the Metropolitan Strategy, and the draft North Subregional Strategy. The attributes of each centre were considered in terms of environmental constraints, heritage significance, capitalisation, proximity to services and facilities, amount of housing required to support the centre, housing choice, and consultation with internal and external bodies.

Precincts were then selected and housing forms identified for each precinct. The findings of the draft Ku-ring-gai and Hornsby Subregional Employment Study were considered, which led to a number of commercial centres being included as precincts. It was identified that to maximise opportunities for housing close to transport nodes and commercial centres, high density housing is required. Five storey housing is the preferred form of multi-unit housing for the majority of the identified precincts. It allows a higher density of housing and an appropriate built form which can achieve underground carparking and quality landscaped area, while being a smaller scale than the 8-10 storey form currently facilitated by Council's high density planning controls.

The final step in the selection process was precinct evaluation. The evaluation was undertaken in-house and with the assistance of consultants. Environmental consultants prepared vegetation mapping identifying significant trees and biodiversity. Land economists provided a development industry perspective. An urban design consultant has prepared key principles for development of precincts, and a traffic consultant has assisted with traffic modelling.

Dwelling yields resulting from the precincts have been determined using the demonstrated standards from the 1998 Housing Strategy, and the progression of precincts is proposed on the basis of an 80% take-up rate. The DOP has confirmed that the yield assessment by Council has been undertaken on a sound basis, and that the proposed yields can be achieved by landowners and developers over time.

Opportunities to ensure 2,600 additional dwellings have been identified within 25 precincts. The precincts are located throughout the Shire, from Berowra in the north to Carlingford in the south. The housing form identified includes some mixed use commercial precincts and consists predominantly of 5 storey apartment buildings, along with a mix of townhouses, 3 storey walk-up flats, and 8-10 storey apartments.

Volume 1 of the Housing Strategy details the process and methodology for the identification of precincts. Volume 2 identifies the 25 precincts and contains an evaluation of precincts, along with draft key principles diagrams, prepared by an urban design consultant to guide future development of the precincts.