



4 July 2024

Department of Infrastructure, Transport,
Regional Development, Communications and the Arts
GPO Box 594
CANBERRA ACT 2601

To whom it may concern

Draft National Urban Policy – Submission from Hornsby Shire Council

The purpose of this letter is to provide feedback on the Federal Government's draft National Urban Policy (draft NUP). Please note that the comments contained within this letter are technical officer-level comments only, as the matter has not been reported to Hornsby Shire's elected Council.

Hornsby Shire is a local government area (LGA) located in Sydney's northern suburbs, 25km from the Sydney CBD. Covering a land area of 460sqkm the Shire features urban, rural, riparian and bushland environments. As nearly 70 per cent of the Shire is National Park and reserves, most of our 154,000 residents live in urban areas, which comprise just 10 per cent of the Shire.

The aim of the draft NUP is to improve the quality of life for people that live in our cities and urban areas. The draft NUP's goals and objectives largely align with the direction of our long-term strategic planning documents, the Hornsby Shire Community Strategic Plan and Local Strategic Planning Statement which guide the growth of our LGA towards being Liveable, Sustainable, Productive and Collaborative.

It is important for all levels of government to work together to ensure that the goals of the NUP are realised. This submission focuses on matters of collaboration which should be considered when finalising the draft NUP.

Place-based strategic planning

The NSW Government has, under the National Housing Accord, committed to delivering 377,000 new homes across the state by 2029. This has resulted in a five-year housing completion target of 5,500 homes in the Shire. Housing availability and affordability is a challenge facing all households across Sydney and Hornsby Shire's role in contributing to housing supply is acknowledged.

It is Council's position that local governments should be able to plan locally to address the housing crisis. This aligns with the draft NUP principle that urban strategic planning must reflect a place-based approach. Housing strategies led by local governments can more closely match demand, feasibility, constraints and infrastructure. To this end, Council has been developing a place-based medium density housing strategy that would take advantage of local opportunities to provide high quality housing options in well located areas.

The NSW Government has begun implementing planning regulations for low and mid-rise housing in existing low density urban areas. While such broad changes may increase housing supply, they do not represent best practice planning, as they do not consider local place-based matters. Local governments are best placed to identify where and how to house future populations while avoiding areas that may be high risk, environmentally sensitive or poorly connected.

Servicing current and future communities

The draft NUP recognises that action is needed to improve strategic planning at all levels between governments to ensure better coordination. Further, it identifies that investments in infrastructure and increasing opportunities for people to lead active and social connected lives are key urban challenges.

Since the 1990s, Council has identified housing precincts close to Hornsby Shire's existing train stations to support higher density residential developments. Most recently, Council adopted the Hornsby Town Centre Masterplan in November 2023. The Masterplan was designed to guide the future growth and redevelopment of our strategic centre including the opportunity to deliver a significant 4,900 dwelling increase to high-density housing stock in the immediate vicinity of the Hornsby train station and bus interchange.

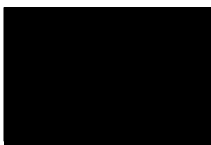
During the 6 year preparation of the Masterplan, Council consulted with NSW State agencies, holding co-design workshops and project meetings, to ensure collaboration and consensus between agencies as the project progressed. This work is critical in ensuring that the wide range of infrastructure required to support the growth of the Hornsby Town Centre is committed to by the relevant agencies and within work programmes. It remains unclear whether the efforts of local government to achieve a place-based vision of housing and employment supply are able to be supported by the State Government through best use of land and infrastructure funding. As outlined in the draft NUP, State or territory governments are critical for planning and investing in our cities and suburbs, directly funding critical and community infrastructure. This needs to align with local government planning.

In summary, the draft NUP identifies the benefits strategic planning can offer in providing quality urban outcomes. It is crucial that all levels of government work together in a consistent framework to ensure the success of the policy and the delivery of quality urban outcomes for the community. The role of local government should be elevated further to acknowledge the most effective way for housing delivery to be achieved is encouraging local place-based planning to identify local solutions that achieve state mandated policy goals.

To this end, the finalised NUP should promote negotiations and collaboration between all levels of government for projects that clearly align with the NUP's goals and objectives. It should also promote open and constructive collaboration between levels of government to facilitate projects that contribute to delivery of key infrastructure.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment and I trust the information raised above will assist with finalisation of the draft NUP. Should you require any information regarding the contents of this letter, please contact the undersigned, on 9847 6744 or kvickery@hornsby.nsw.gov.au.

Yours faithfully,



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