

Resolution of Council

25 August 2025

Item 13.12

Protect the RJ Williams Building as Public Housing

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Thompson –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) under Sustainable Sydney 2030-2050: Continuing the Vision, the City has established targets for the Local Government Area, for 11,700 social (including public) housing dwellings and 11,700 affordable housing dwellings (delivered through affordable housing levies on development) by 2036;
- (i) the City of Sydney has a substantial track record in supporting the development of new affordable, rent-controlled housing including through development contributions, discounted land sales, grants and planning agreements. This work has led to thousands of affordable homes, achieved through over \$400 million in development levies, \$31.6 million in discounted land sales, and \$13 million in cash grants from Council's Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund;
- (ii) however, other forms of public, social and affordable housing across the City of Sydney have been declining, including as a result of the closure or sale of housing owned by charities and not-for-profit groups, and the sale or privatisation of public housing;
- (iii) recently announced public housing projects from the NSW Labor Government will not deliver enough new public homes to address the decline in public housing, from past sales and privatisations, including at Millers Point and the Glebe Estate. As a result, social (including public) housing in the City of Sydney is projected to decline further from its current level of 7.8% to 7.5% by 2030; and
- (iv) the expected waiting time for general applicants to be housed by the NSW Housing Register in Glebe is 10+ years;

(B) Council further note:

- (i) the RJ Williams building is a large building owned by Wesley Mission, at 274-276 Glebe Point Road, Glebe;
- (ii) the building previously provided affordable and seniors housing. However, it was closed 15 years ago due to safety concerns. Urgent renovations to update the housing were identified. Wesley Mission submitted a development application, which was approved following community consultation. The proposed redevelopment would have provided up to 39 upgraded, rent-controlled homes;
- (iii) following a Council resolution on 14 December 2020, Council resolved to support the renovation through a \$3 million cash grant from Council's Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund;
- (iv) however, Wesley Mission was unsuccessful in its application to the Federal Labor Government's Housing Australia Future Fund. Wesley Mission has since advised Council that it was unable to secure sufficient funding to proceed with the proposed development, and would not be accepting the Council grant offered to them; and
- (v) instead, the RJ William's building has been placed on the market, with its real estate listing suggesting the sites' potential to be redeveloped as luxury residential apartments; and

(C) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Housing, Rose Jackson to:

- (i) request the NSW Government purchase and support the redevelopment of the RJ Williams building at 274-276 Glebe Point Road, Glebe, as ongoing public housing;
- (ii) note the City has previously committed funding to a project of this nature on this site; and
- (iii) note the projected decline in social (including public) housing in the City of Sydney if stronger action is not taken to increase the delivery of social and public housing.

Carried unanimously.

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