

Resolution of Council

23 March 2026

Item 13.9

NSW Local Government and Affordable Housing Forum - Examples, Pathways, and Opportunities

Moved by Councillor Ellsmore, seconded by Councillor Miller –

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

- (i) on Friday 13 March 2026, the Henry Halloran Urban and Regional Research Initiative (HHURRI) at the University of Sydney hosted a forum for local councillors and staff in the Sydney CBD about local councils and affordable housing;
- (ii) the forum was co-hosted by Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore and Dr Greta Werner. It was organised with support from the Office of Councillor Sylvie Ellsmore, and Mayors and Councillors from Forbes Shire Council, Willoughby City Council, Newcastle City Council and Byron Shire Council. Other councils presenting included Randwick Council, Ryde Council and North Sydney Council;
- (iii) the Office of the CEO, Resilient Sydney and City staff provided support and advice, including sharing insights and resources from previous Lord Mayoral Affordable Housing Forums;
- (iv) the City of Sydney's Chief Executive Officer presented at the forum on innovations in protecting and expanding local affordable housing and social housing;

- (v) the forum included presentations and case studies from councils and leading housing researchers, about how different councils:
 - (a) have established and are implemented affordable housing programs and policies;
 - (b) have funded, delivered, manage, own or co-own public, social and/or affordable housing;
 - (c) are delivering or supporting different kinds of housing, including for key workers, older women, women experiencing domestic violence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and people with a disability;
 - (d) have developed or have leveraged a wide range of partnerships and funding arrangements to deliver public, social and affordable housing, including with the NSW Government and Community Housing Providers;
 - (e) are implementing strategies to protect housing supply including managing short term rentals; and
 - (f) are trialling innovative new affordable housing projects, such as Community Land Trusts; and more; and
 - (g) representatives from 41 councils attended;

(B) Council note that the forum demonstrated that:

- (i) local councils across NSW are playing a leading role in the delivery of social (including public), affordable and diverse housing in their local communities. They are doing this despite constrained budgets and other pressures;
- (ii) many urban and regional councils across NSW have been developing and implementing a wide range of affordable housing strategies, some for decades;
- (iii) a small but increasing number of councils have implemented affordable housing levy schemes from development;
- (iv) councils are frustrated and concerned about NSW Government planning reforms, where these are undermining or bypassing councils' affordable housing strategies; and
- (v) the Housing Delivery Authority, State Significant development pathway, and "infill affordable housing" pathways in particular were highlighted with concern in a number of presentations. These pathways were reported to facilitate the replacing of councils' stronger local affordable housing provisions, with no affordable housing, or less affordable housing. Where these pathways included some affordable housing requirements, these pathways were also reported to replace councils' requirements for high quality, permanent and genuinely affordable housing, with temporary and more expensive "affordable" housing. This reflects the City of Sydney's experience and advocacy;

(C) Council note that:

- (i) stories of housing affordability being achieved by local councils on the ground are not well known, even within the local council network;
- (ii) there is strong expertise amongst the council network, about opportunities and lessons for the protection and delivery of affordable housing for local communities;
- (iii) there is a strong demand amongst the council network for more skill sharing forums and resources to facilitate council information sharing. Affordable housing levy schemes and how to sustainably fund or resource social (including council owned) and affordable housing are two key areas of interest to the network;
- (iv) the presentations from the forum were recorded, and will be distributed to the network and the public by HHURRI;
- (v) the City of Sydney is leading the way in the delivery of affordable housing in Sydney. This has been achieved through over \$495 million raised in levies, sale of \$31.6 million of City land at a discounted rate, through more than \$16 million in cash grants to not-for-profit housing providers from our Affordable and Diverse Housing Fund and through Voluntary Planning Agreements and our planning controls;
- (vi) the City of Sydney is on track to support the delivery of over 6,000 new affordable rental homes by 2036;
- (vii) the City of Sydney hosts Resilient Sydney, a network of all the 33 Sydney Metropolitan Councils;
- (viii) in 2021, the City of Sydney led the Resilient Sydney Affordable and Diverse Housing Project to help councils develop their own affordable rental housing schemes. This work has led to the draft Regional Affordable Rental Housing Contribution Scheme for Blacktown, Blue Mountains, Hawkesbury, Camden and Wollondilly Councils which the Lord Mayor has supported; and

(D) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to provide advice to Council about opportunities to support further information sharing and capacity building within the local council network, for the protection and delivery of social (including public) and affordable housing by local councils.

Carried unanimously.

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