Resolution of Council

26 October 2026

Item 13.10

Affordable Housing for Those who Keep our City Moving

Moved by Councillor Arkins, seconded by Councillor Maxwell -

It is resolved that:

(A) Council note:

(i) the City of Sydney is experiencing an ongoing housing affordability crisis, with increasing rents and housing costs making it difficult for many workers in our city to live close to where they work

(ii) the availability of affordable housing is critical to ensuring Sydney remains a diverse, inclusive and easy place to live

(iii) the City of Sydney is a major employer, with staff working across a broad range of essential public services, including waste collection, parks and open space maintenance, libraries, community services, childcare, sport and recreation and Council operations

(iv) many City employees, particularly those in lower-paid roles, face significant challenges finding affordable housing within the local government area, contributing to longer commutes, cost-of-living pressures and difficulty attracting and retaining staff

(v) the City of Sydney's Affordable Housing Program provides support for lower-income households, including essential workers, to live and work in the area

(vi) incomes within occupations can vary, and occupation categories may not include all people on low incomes. Access to affordable rental housing for essential workers should be determined by income

(vii) eligibility is guided by NSW Government eligibility criteria with income eligibility set at a percentage of median income. Affordable Housing delivered through these arrangements is generally targeted towards eligible very low, low and moderate income households, with Community Housing Providers responsible for tenancies in accordance with applicable eligibility requirements. However, some essential workers, including at the City of Sydney, exceed the income eligibility limit for affordable housing

(viii) the NSW Government is in the process of updating its Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines. Council has repeatedly advocated for the guidelines to be updated in line with the City's policy position that is affordable housing is provided for the long-term (in perpetuity) to people on very-low, low or moderate incomes and that rent is charged as a percentage of household income – not a discount to market rent

(ix) the NSW Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing recommended the Ministerial Guidelines include a definition of essential workers, which the NSW Government has agreed to do

(B) the Chief Executive Officer be requested to:

(i) consult with not-for-profit Community Housing Providers to understand the eligibility, opportunities and rent provision of existing and planned 'essential workers' housing

(ii) develop a working definition of essential worker housing informed by the City of Sydney's own policies, the recommendations of the NSW Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing, the updated NSW Affordable Housing Ministerial Guidelines (when they are released), research that has occurred by Government and peak bodies; and the not-for profit community housing providers in (i) above, with a view to broadening the eligibility of essential workers for supported housing

(iii) provide advice to Council on whether updates to the City of Sydney's Affordable Housing Program are required to ensure essential workers are included and outline the process

(C) Council support in principle providing affordable housing contributions for essential workers that meet affordable housing eligibility criteria

(D) the Lord Mayor be requested to write to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces, and the Minister for Housing indicating Council's in principle support for providing affordable housing contributions for essential worker affordable housing, and requesting an update on the NSW Government's definition of essential worker housing.

Carried unanimously.

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