



MAYORAL MINUTE NO 23/2023

THE NSW GOVERNMENT MUST TALK TO COUNCILS ON HOUSING

14 NOVEMBER 2023

Dear Councillors,

Since the last meeting of Council, I received a letter from the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces The Hon. Paul Scully which urged Council to permit terraces, townhouses and two-storey residential flat buildings in R2 low density zones and permit residential flat buildings in R3 medium density zones.

The Minister requested that this letter be tabled at the next meeting of Council, so that Councillors can be clear on the NSW Government's intentions. I have attached the letter to this Mayoral Minute.

I can understand the points raised by the Planning Minister. However, I'm disappointed that yet again, we're subject to another broadcast from the NSW Government about the state's housing crisis, rather than a genuine discussion about working with their most important stakeholder – local government.

For many years, this Council has fought to achieve better outcomes for our residents when it comes to housing. When we worked closely with the previous NSW Government, we were able to include a housing diversity provision in our Local Environmental Plan around Metro stations, ensuring that those apartments would be suited to the families of our Shire.

I'm concerned that the Minister's request could be a trojan horse for one-size-fits-all homes that aren't suited to family living. I'm also concerned that allowing terrace homes and apartments carte blanche in our R2 zones will destroy the increasingly rare single-lot family home with a backyard.

The Hills Shire is one of the few local government areas in Sydney that hasn't become dominated by duplexes and granny flats. The trade-off for that has been increased dwellings around our Metro stations. Our residents value single-lot homes with backyards. If you can't have these in an LGA more than 30km away from the Sydney CBD, then where can you?

The Hills Shire Council has a hierarchy of residential zones in place which facilitates the construction of all types of housing within the Shire. This includes low density dwellings, terraces, small lot housing, multi-dwelling housing (townhouses) and residential flat buildings of differing scales. This recognises the need to accommodate a diversity of housing types.

Our housing strategy puts density where it makes sense, close to areas of high connectivity in our town centres. The highest densities are in the centres and as you move out the densities drop. Our R2 zones are outside the appropriate location for higher densities.

This hierarchy is logical and considers infrastructure capacity, transit-oriented development principles and the local character and constraints of individual areas. Most importantly, this hierarchy, our Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Environmental Plan were developed

in consultation with our community, the Department of Planning and the Greater Cities Commission as the most effective and logical way to successfully achieve the significant housing growth targets set for The Shire.

The Hills Shire is also well ahead of our housing targets. It's possible to build more than 30,000 homes under existing controls and strategies. We should be congratulated by the State Government for our work and consulted on the way ahead.

We value housing diversity and remain committed to accommodating the full spectrum of housing types within in our LGA. However, our community is not prepared to give developers permission to put medium density housing and apartments anywhere they like.

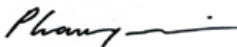
For many months, we've asked the Premier, the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces and the Minister for Housing to meet us and discuss how we can work together to reach our common goals. We've heard nothing in response.

As I pointed out in the last meeting of Council, The Hills Shire is ranked second for the most homes approved in the 12 months to March 2023, with 3799 dwellings over that period. We are also ranked second only to Blacktown on the number of dwellings expected (13,830) in our LGA over the next five years. As one of Sydney's most successful growth Councils, I urge the Minister for Planning to again take up our offer of a meeting to discuss the many issues I've raised in this chamber over the past five months.

MOTION

Accordingly, I move:

1. This Mayoral Minute be received.
2. The Mayor writes to the Minister for Planning again requesting a meeting to discuss housing in The Hills and how to work together to reach our common goals.



Dr Peter Gangemi
MAYOR