



**SUPPLEMENTARY  
BUSINESS PAPER**  
**(Late Item Memo Item 7)**  
**GENERAL MEETING**

**Wednesday 14 February 2024  
at 6:30PM**



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### **SUPPLEMENTARY ITEMS**

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**ITEM 7      PC3/24 - Low and Mid-Rise Housing Reforms**

<i>Additional information with <b>CHANGE</b> to Recommendation</i>
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Since the finalisation of Director’s Report No. PC3/24, further review has been undertaken regarding potential impacts of the Mid- and Low-Rise Explanation of Intended Effect concerning wastewater infrastructure and water quality. Council officers have also attended further briefings by representatives from the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and it is evident that there is need for clear medium density and general housing targets at the local level to support precinct-based planning with sufficient infrastructure. These issues are discussed in further detail, below.

**Water infrastructure and water quality**

As outlined in Director’s Report PC3/24, under the planning reforms, dual occupancies would be permitted on approximately 27,000 to 34,000 R2 Low Density Residential lots in the Shire. This includes lots in suburbs such as Dural, Glenorie, Arcadia, Brooklyn, and Cowan with limited sewer infrastructure (serviced by the Priority Sewerage Program) or unsewered.

Under the Priority Sewerage Program, Sydney Water provided wastewater services to previously unsewered areas within the Shire, designed to accommodate the existing capacity of the zoned land. Services were not designed to support growth beyond that capacity.

On a broader scale, three water resource recovery facilities, also known as sewage treatment plants, are operated by Sydney Water in Hornsby Shire. These are located in Brooklyn, Hornsby Heights, and West Hornsby. These facilities treat wastewater before it is reused or discharged to oceans or rivers, such as the Hawkesbury.

Water resource recovery facilities operate under licenses issued by the Environmental Protection Authority (EPA), limiting the load and concentration of pollution discharged. This means that if increased pollution load is processed by the facility, it can be diluted with additional water. This does not reduce the overall pollution emitted from facilities. As such, it is foreseeable that additional dispersed residential growth would result in more water pollution.

For context, the urbanisation of Hornsby in the 1970s and 1980s resulted in sewage treatment plants running beyond capacity. Sediment runoff and nutrient pollution from sewage treatment plants led to increasingly polluted waterways, with odour pollution, algal blooms and impacts to flora and fauna, including fish kills. In response, Council placed a moratorium on the processing of development applications within the West Hornsby Sewage Treatment Plant. This led to the signing of a Statement of Joint Intent (SoJI), between Council, the NSW Government, Environmental Protection Authority, (Sydney) Water Board and the Hawkesbury-Nepean Catchment Management Trust. The SoJI acknowledged the significant impacts of polluted urban stormwater run-off and led to the upgrading of the West Hornsby and Hornsby Heights Sewage Treatment Plants.

Upgrades to wastewater facilities are now undertaken from time to time based on growth projections within catchments. These upgrades are reflected in licenses, with timeframes for the scope and timeframes of their delivery. The widespread and unplanned residential growth anticipated under the reforms should be considered by Sydney Water and the EPA. Further upgrades should be identified, planned, and funded to ensure the long-term health of the Hawkesbury River and associated waterways, with no alterations to licenses to permit increases in pollution loads.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the reforms be excluded from application on unsewered lands and lands serviced by a Priority Sewerage Program until such time that Sydney Water can expand services to meet potential capacity. It is also recommended that Sydney Water demonstrate how wastewater resource recovery facilities (treatment plants) will accommodate future growth associated with the reforms.

### **Release of Revised NSW Government Housing Targets**

The NSW Government has not released Greater Sydney or local housing targets since the finalisation of *A Metropolis of Three Cities*, published in 2018. Local housing strategies were developed in line with that plan, building local evidence bases to set new targets to 2026 and 2036.

As part of its endorsement of Council's Local Housing Strategy, the NSW Government required Council to prepare a medium density housing strategy to identify land well suited for medium density housing. That strategy has progressed in the absence of State guidance on revised housing targets. Its preparation has adopted a precinct-based approach to the delivery of medium density housing in well located areas that would satisfy historic demand and responds to local constraints and opportunities.

NSW Government Housing Targets were set to be exhibited at the end of 2023 with the release of the Greater Cities Commission's draft City and Region Plans. These targets were to be informed by holistic review of housing capacity, infrastructure planning and local opportunities and constraints. With the NSW Government's dissolution of the Greater Cities Commission, there does not appear to be a unified and comprehensive evidence base to support local housing targets.

The Six Cities Plan, including its proposed housing targets, should be released to provide a clear region-wide approach for the delivery of housing. The revised local housing targets should include the identification of a medium density component so councils can ensure local planning meets these revised targets.

**Recommendation:** It is recommended that the NSW Government publish revised housing targets, including a medium density component, and infrastructure commitments to support those targets. It is also recommended that Council share its method and findings for medium density housing and the outcomes of its precinct-based approach which is based on current targets and (given the chance) could be updated to address revised targets.

**RECOMMENDATION**

THAT Council make a submission in response to exhibition of the *Explanation of intended effect: Changes to create low and mid-rise housing* outlining Council's:

1. Concerns and recommendations outlined in Director's Report No. PC3/24 including the absence of local planning, density of development permitted under the controls, impacts on character, heritage, natural environment and tree canopy loss, infrastructure and risks of over development in hazard areas.
2. Commitment to facilitate the delivery of a diverse range of housing as detailed in Hornsby Local Housing Strategy 2020 and request the release of revised housing targets, including a medium density component.
3. Methodology and precinct-based approach to the preparation of a local medium density housing strategy and request the opportunity to continue progressing Council's own local strategy that responds to the character of our area and community expectations to gain exemption from the proposed changes.
4. Willingness to continue to investigate opportunity for appropriate housing delivery in the future, should a medium density housing target be identified.
5. Concerns regarding wastewater infrastructure and request consultation with Sydney Water to confirm infrastructure requirements, commitment of funding for capital improvements to service additional development and assurance from the NSW Environmental Protection Authority that no alterations will be made to licenses to permit increased pollutant load.

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**Attachments:**

There are no attachments for this report.

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