
ITEM 5.2 **MAYORAL MINUTE - CR MEGNA - NSW GOVERNMENT LOW AND MID RISE HOUSING POLICY****Attachments:** **Nil**

Submitted by: Councillor Michael Megna (Mayor)

MOTION

That Council:

1. Note the significant concerns expressed by the Drummoyne community regarding the impact of the Low and Mid Rise Housing reforms on neighbourhood character, infrastructure capacity and local amenity, and acknowledge the advocacy undertaken to date.
2. Express disappointment that the Minister's response indicates an expectation that council consider further increases to density, despite the substantial challenges posed for established communities.
3. Notes that with development in existing and emerging renewal precincts, and without the Low and Mid-Rise Housing reforms, the City of Canada Bay's population is projected to double.
4. Call on the Premier to deactivate the Low and Mid Rise Housing provisions within the City of Canada Bay in the context of the existing projected housing increases and in response to community concerns, local infrastructure limitations and the lack of appropriate local context consideration.

BACKGROUND

The recent State imposed Low and Mid-Rise Housing (LMR) reforms have generated significant concern within Drummoyne.

The introduction of the LMR represent what many have described as a "sledgehammer approach" to planning, one that applies blunt density increases without the nuanced consideration required to balance housing need, infrastructure capacity, heritage and local character.

Late last year I spoke with several residents in Drummoyne on this issue and have been in contact with Jacqui Brosnan who is the President of the Drummoyne Responsible Development Action Group. I'd like to acknowledge the work that Jacqui has done and continues to do in advocating for the State Government to reconsider the LMR provisions.

In response to community representation, I wrote to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces outlining the implications of the LMR provisions on established neighbourhoods, infrastructure capacity and local character. The Minister's response reaffirmed the Government's expectation that councils facilitate increased density under the new policy settings, effectively signalling that councils are expected to "do more, not less," despite the practical challenges these reforms create.

I also met with representatives of the Drummoyne Resident Action Group following the Minister's response. These discussions confirm that, without State Government intervention, it will be near impossible to address the most significant issues generated by the uniform application of the LMR controls.

The Drummoyne Responsible Development Action Group have advised that they met with the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, and it was confirmed that the Government will not support deactivating or suspending the LMR rezonings.

Following receipt of the Minister's letter, Council staff met with the Department, who confirmed that the LMR provisions will continue to apply in Drummoyne and will remain in force irrespective of whether an alternative local planning framework is prepared. On this basis, preparing an alternative plan would not provide any practical benefit.

In addition to Council advocacy, I acknowledge the efforts of the local State Member, Stephanie Di Pasqua, who raised questions in Parliament regarding the reforms and their effect on local planning processes. These parliamentary contributions highlight the widespread unease felt across the community. However, the Government's response confirms that the reforms remain firmly in place and that councils are required to accommodate this new approach to housing delivery.

While ever the Government's position is that the LMR provisions will not be switched off, Council cannot invest several hundred thousand dollars on developing a plan that would have no positive impact on this issue that the community is attempting to address.

However, I believe that Council should continue to advocate for the LMR provisions within the City of Canada Bay to be deactivated. The City of Canada Bay is experiencing a period of unprecedented growth. Based on development within existing and emerging renewal precincts, the City's population is projected to double over the next 30 to 40 years. Therefore, the City of Canada Bay is and will continue to make a substantial contribution to housing supply with or without new housing in LMR areas.

It is important to note that Council has no legal power to pause or defer the assessment of development applications lodged under the new framework. Council is bound by the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act to assess DAs in accordance with applicable State controls, regardless of whether or not those controls align with local strategic planning or community expectations.