

**Submission  
No 33**

## **OPTIONS FOR ESSENTIAL WORKER HOUSING IN NEW SOUTH WALES**

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FOR RANDWICK COUNCIL NORTH WARD

Labor

Mr Alex Greenwich, MP  
Chair  
Select Committee on Essential Worker Housing  
NSW Legislative Assembly  
NSW Parliament House  
Macquarie St  
SYDNEY NSW 2000

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Dear Mr Greenwich,

I am a candidate for Randwick City Council in the North Ward that includes Randwick, Coogee and Clovelly. With a background as UNSW Sustainability Director, a lawyer, and lecturer in environmental law and economics, I have perspectives on both local social needs, environmental protection and community priorities. My current advocacy with the NSW Nurses & Midwives Association highlights my dedication to supporting our essential workers and addressing housing affordability.

This submission is written in a private capacity, driven by a commitment to contribute to practical policy solutions and on the ground outcomes that can help address the housing crisis in New South Wales.

## **We Need More Homes in Strategic Locations**

To provide housing for essential workers we urgently need more homes in areas like Randwick City Council. Sydney's Eastern Suburbs include neighbourhoods that are close to transport infrastructure and services, as well as jobs for essential workers, especially in the health and education precinct around UNSW and the Prince of Wales Hospital. Affordable homes in strategic locations like Randwick City Council are crucial for essential workers.

Building more housing for essential workers in locations like Randwick, as well as similarly strategic precincts in Sydney and regional NSW, also avoids the adverse environmental, social and economic impacts of urban sprawl on Sydney's outer suburbs and our urban fringes.

## **Clarifying what is meant by an essential worker and affordable housing**

Essential workers housing policy in NSW is currently confusing and opaque, varying greatly from one Local Government Area to the next. This lack of consistency creates barriers to effective implementation and hinders the delivery of much-needed affordable housing. To address this, the NSW Government should streamline and simplify affordable essential worker housing policy in NSW and consider:

1. A standardised definition for "essential workers" and "affordable housing"
2. A centralised framework to monitor what is approved, built, and delivered
3. The funding required to make affordable housing for essential workers possible
4. A standard method for affordable housing for essential worker planning and delivery.

By providing clarity and certainty, we can enable the industry and community housing providers to deliver as much affordable housing as is feasible.

An "essential worker" should be defined as an individual employed in a sector or role that is critical to the functioning and well-being of society. This includes services that are necessary for public safety, health, education, infrastructure, and daily community needs. To establish a clear and actionable definition for "essential worker" housing, the following sectors could include:

- **Healthcare:** Nurses, paramedics, aged care workers, and other healthcare professionals.
- **Education:** Teachers, early childhood educators, and support staff.
- **Emergency Services:** Police officers, firefighters, and emergency medical responders.
- **Public Transport:** Bus drivers, train operators, and other public transit workers.

- **Utilities and Infrastructure:** Workers in water, electricity, sanitation, and telecommunications services.
- **Social Services:** Child protection workers, social workers, and community service providers.
- **Other Critical Public Services:** Local government staff, public housing workers, and public safety personnel.

A regulatory agency should review these criteria and ensure that essential workers fall within a defined income bracket that reflects moderate or low-income status, ensuring that housing support targets workers who are unable to afford market-rate housing in the regions they serve.

By adopting these criteria, the NSW Government can prioritise worker cohorts and regions where housing is most needed, ensuring that essential services remain accessible and resilient.

### **We need Ambitious Targets for Essential Worker Housing**

It is crucial that we recommend that the NSW Government set a specific essential worker housing target to complement the broader housing targets.

While the State has shown leadership in setting housing targets, we need equally strong leadership around social and key worker housing targets.

I urge this committee to recommend the NSW Government set a short-term goal to delivering at least 25% of new housing stock as essential worker housing until we reach a target of 15% of total housing stock as essential worker housing. This is an ambitious target but are both achievable and essential to drive real change in our city.

This approach will significantly increase the number of homes available for essential workers such as nurses, teachers, and childcare workers can afford to live near their workplaces.

### **Randwick Council's Affordable Housing Initiatives**

Randwick City Council has already implemented several measures to promote affordable housing, which could serve as a model for other LGAs:

1. The Affordable Rental Housing Program, requiring developers to contribute a percentage of new dwellings for affordable housing
2. The Affordable Housing Contribution Scheme, collecting funds from developers for affordable housing projects
3. Partnerships with community housing providers to manage and operate affordable housing units
4. Inclusion of affordable housing targets in the Local Strategic Planning Statement and Local Environmental Plan
5. Support for State Environmental Planning Policy (Affordable Rental Housing) 2009
6. Collaboration with neighbouring councils on regional affordable housing strategies
7. Exploration of Council-owned land for potential affordable housing developments
8. Development of a local Affordable Housing Strategy
9. Support for diverse housing types, including secondary dwellings and multi-dwelling housing
10. Incentives for developers who exceed minimum affordable housing requirements
11. Regular monitoring and reporting on affordable housing needs and outcomes

These initiatives demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that essential workers and long-term residents can continue to afford to live in our community.

### **Conclusion**

Addressing the housing crisis requires bold action and innovative solutions. Thank you for your work on this committee. I hope all levels of government can work together to provide homes for essential workers and create more diverse, inclusive and sustainable communities across Sydney and New South Wales.

Aaron Magner



Labor Candidate  
Randwick City Council North Ward