

The recent Herald Editorial "Sydney's growing pains get worse" just shoots the messenger in the form of the development industry by attaching negative adjectives to the word development. We have over development, shady, shonky and just plain unnecessary development, and inappropriate development. The adjectives continue into the old and new characters with 'peaceful green suburbs' being overtaken by 'soulless and unsightly apartment towers'. The Herald ReachTEL poll is referred to where 60 percent of respondents identified overdevelopment as a major issue. Clearly the adjective 'over' encouraged the result just as a survey asking if you supported overeating would probably get 60 percent saying this is a major issue.

Clearly Sydney is going through one of its biggest changes of character in its history. The old days of spreading peaceful green suburbs are now getting another layer of more urban development. And many people want this type of development. They want an urban lifestyle, they prefer being close to public transport and they find this type of living far more affordable. As Sydney grows from its current 5 million people up to 8 million the planners of the city are balancing where the new growth will go. It is not the developers doing this, it is the Greater Sydney Commission and the NSW Department of Planning who are identifying the Planned Precincts, Transit Oriented Development zones, Urban Renewal Areas, Growth Areas and Strategic Centres. All the developers do is follow the governments lead and look at development opportunities in these nominated precincts.

The editorial suggests setting up a Residents Defenders Office presumably to fight change to the peaceful green suburbs but they will not represent the future residents who are looking for somewhere to live. We will also need a Future Residents Support Office to make sure that planning decisions understand housing affordability issues and the importance of intergenerational equity. Is it fine for existing baby boomers in their expensive suburban houses to prefer that no change occurs nearby or do they have a responsibility for where their children and their grand-children will live? I believe we all do have a responsibility to help shape a future for next generations and this future is going to be different to the peaceful green suburbs. And it is already happening as shown by an analysis of the 2016 census. 30 percent of Sydneysiders now live in apartments and 20 percent of these are families with another 8 percent as one-parent families.

Polling by demographer McCrindle for the Urban Taskforce indicates that the four main factors that influence people living in an apartment are access to public transport, affordability, security and a cosmopolitan lifestyle. The average apartment in Sydney is \$400,000 cheaper than the average house so many people, including families, are trading house size for location. But will these people, who represent almost a third of Sydneysiders, be allowed to join the Herald's proposed Residents Defenders Office or will we also need to set up an Apartment Dwellers Support Office to champion those who live in what the Herald calls 'soulless apartment towers'. For the record I live in an apartment building and I am happy to join an Apartment Dwellers Support Office or a Future Residents Support Office.

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