

26 June 2026

Ms Simone Plummer
Director Planning
Inner West Council
PO Box 14
PETERSHAM NSW 2049

Sent to: planning@innerwest.nsw.gov.au

Dear Ms Plummer

Inner West Draft Development Control Plan

I write in response to the public exhibition of the Inner West Draft Development Control Plan (DCP).

Urban Taskforce Australia appreciates efforts by councils to ensure that planning controls are up to date and appropriate. However, this draft DCP appears to raise the bar so high that housing supply is likely to be restricted within the LGA.

Anti-development development controls

Urban Taskforce contends that measures proposed in the draft DCP will make the delivery of housing more complicated and expensive, significantly undermining feasibility and making many local housing projects untenable.

In the midst of a housing supply crisis, with Inner West approving, to date, just over half the dwellings it needs under the pro-rate National Housing Accord targets, this DCP throws an array of restrictions, barriers, and costs at development that will hinder the delivery of new housing supply.

While we appreciate that Council is keen to deliver more affordable housing and to protect the character of the neighbourhood, Urban Taskforce believes that the proposals within the DCP are likely to prove to be counter-productive – preserving what should be renewed and denying the opportunity to deliver the accommodation needed – both market and affordable housing.

Urban Taskforce Australia believes that Council should be more pragmatic in setting its controls and look to use them to facilitate future development within the LGA.

Where is the housing?

The draft DCP has the following aims, namely to:

- *facilitate the achievement of the aims and objectives of the LEP;*
- *provide high quality, sustainable urban design outcomes;*
- *enhance the unique, distinctive character of Inner West neighbourhoods and centres, while accommodating sustainable urban growth;*

- ensure development positively responds to the desired future character of the neighbourhood;
- mitigate climate change and improve the resilience of the community and infrastructure of Inner West to future shocks and stresses;
- ensure a reasonable level of amenity for residents, workers, and visitors;
- maintain and enhance the significance of heritage places within Inner West;
- ensure development responds to its context and to the needs of all people within the community;
- protect endangered ecological communities, enhance habitat for endemic species, and increase tree canopy;
- improve the safety, functionality, and diversity of the public domain; and
- support economic development and productivity, and a diversity of employment opportunities.

Unlike the [objects](#) of the *Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979*, which include “the supply, delivery, and maintenance of housing, including affordable housing” and “a proportionate and risk-based approach to environmental planning and assessment”, the principles of the DCP appear to focus almost exclusively on restricting and controlling new development.

This puts Inner West Council at odds with its neighbours in Burwood, whose council has supported new housing and encouraged density.

It threatens to wrap the Inner West in the planning equivalent of cotton wool.

The Inner West is a vibrant, ever changing community that should be focused on accommodating future growth and improvement for its current and prospective residents.

Residential development and increasing housing supply should be key focuses of the DCP, to facilitate new housing delivery and accommodate new homebuyers who want to live in the LGA.

Urban Taskforce has reviewed the proposed controls and provides specific feedback to some elements of the DCP in the sections below.

2.2.1 Lot Design

The objectives around lot design largely appear to limit housing diversity, rather than encouraging it, with an emphasis on “protecting character” as per the following:

Character Alignment: To deliver lot layouts that reinforce the intended future identity and scale of the area.

Local Character: To ensure new development respects the site’s characteristics and the surrounding neighbourhood’s amenity.

To achieve greater housing supply, the Council DCP must recognise and facilitate change – even if that initially jars with neighbourhood character in some cases.

2.4.1 Solar Access

The provisions on solar access require:

- at least one window of the principal living room of any attached dwelling; and
- at least 50% of the private open space of any attached dwelling

to receive at least two hours direct solar access" on 21 June.

Given the need for more housing supply during the current housing supply and affordability crisis, and the difficulty for buildings to ensure that south-facing apartments have the same access to sunlight as those in the north, we trust that Council will apply pragmatism and proportionality to the application of this control.

If this is not evident, then this clause, as drafted, would be a backward step and would be opposed by the Urban Taskforce.

2.5 Transport, Access, and Parking

As outlined in [our previous submission](#) on parking within the LGA, Urban Taskforce does not support measures aimed to restrict car ownership by constraining parking.

This will have perverse outcomes for local residents and businesses and fails to account for how residents of the Inner West might need to use vehicles.

Of specific concern are the following two objectives:

Local Need:	To ensure car parking provision is balanced, minimizing oversupply in transit-rich areas while providing adequate parking in less accessible locations; and
Transport Types:	To ensure new development respects the site's characteristics and the surrounding neighbourhood's amenity.

The development of housing near public transport will not remove the need for cars, and current Council policy positions presumes that everyone will have the same driving needs.

Urban Taskforce contends that Shift workers, including police officers, nurses, ambulance officers, cleaners, hospitality workers, security staff, along with tradies and families, will all need flexibility to move around the city for personal and business reasons, often after hours and beyond the reach of public transport.

We do not agree that constraining parking space will suppress car use and make sustainable transport more attractive than driving, and there is no empirical data to support this.

If anything, parking restrictions will force homebuyers further afield, creating longer travel times, increasing stress, polluting the environment, and resulting in local labour shortages.

The market needs to be able to determine what parking is necessary. Developers have no problem reducing parking if market forces aren't calling for it. However, by prescribing restrictions unilaterally, Council is reducing feasibility by deterring potential buyers who are looking for parking as part of their purchase.

Parking restrictions also undermine local retail and commercial activities by reducing opportunities for people living outside the LGA to patronise local businesses and hospitality venues.

To enforce this transport diktat, Council proposes to apply an array of strategies, such as requiring developers to:

- provide secure bicycle parking and end of trip facilities to promote cycling;
- incorporate electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure (which provides parking for wealthier residents at the expense of those less fortunate); and
- support car share schemes to reduce private car dependency.

Urban Taskforce believes that parking restrictions and mandates should be removed from the DCP and the market should be allowed to deliver what future residents want.

2.8 Trees and Landscaping

Urban Taskforce notes the primary goal of the Inner West Council to **expand the urban forest**.

This appears to contradict and detract from what should be the key focus of the current DCP – increasing housing supply and improving housing affordability.

The costs of compliance with these controls will fall on the homebuyers by increasing the cost of construction and restricting what can be delivered.

Deep soil zone requirements of between 20% and 50% (Haberfield) for dwelling houses, semi-detached dwellings, dual occupancies and attached dwellings and up to 20% for residential flat buildings, build to rent and seniors housing, are particularly onerous.

These requirements within the draft DCP will make it harder to design and deliver new housing and should be moderated. Urban Taskforce does not argue against tree canopy policies per se, but they must be flexible to allow the delivery of the housing that the Inner West needs.

2.12 Heritage

Urban Taskforce is concerned that the objectives and controls around heritage in the DCP may create more barriers to new development.

Heritage controls have frequently been used by assessors as reason to oppose new developments, regardless of their merit, and practical application of such measures is needed to ensure that they are not so abused.

Given that a significant proportion of the LGA is being considered to be Heritage Conservation Areas, there is a very real risk that such controls are simply going to be used to reject applications. Blanket prohibitions like those applied through HCAs represent a significant barrier to Housing supply and feasible development.

We agree that heritage items should be preserved. But the controls relating to heritage should not be extended so far that no other development is possible.

2.17 Adaptable Housing and Accessibility

Adaptable housing is an altruistic position for Council to take, but it risks front-loading significant costs on new homebuyers for the potential (but not guaranteed) benefit of future occupants. For this reason, we do not support the proposed draft DCP clause.

This section has not been developed with the support of market research but instead applies a blanket 10% target to push a pre-determined outcome (this differs from accessible design of public domain, which is already a requirement of the National Construction Code).

Urban Taskforce believes that adaptability should be encouraged through discussions with developers, and based on tangible research as to market needs, rather than enforced through development controls.

2.18 Public Domain

Urban Taskforce strongly objects to the proposed 1% public art levy for developments over \$20m in construction cost.

At 1% of development costs, added to the Council's high affordable housing contribution rates, will make housing development projects unfeasible and undermine the delivery of new housing.

3.3.3. Internal Amenity, Apartment Mix and Layout

While we recognise the desire to ensure that there is a reasonable array of dwelling types within the Inner West LGA, Urban Taskforce believes that dwelling mix should be left to market forces.

The proposed proportions in Table 3.3.3 do not allow the flexibility for a developer, who has a keen understanding of their customer base, to deliver the housing sought by new home buyers.

Conclusion

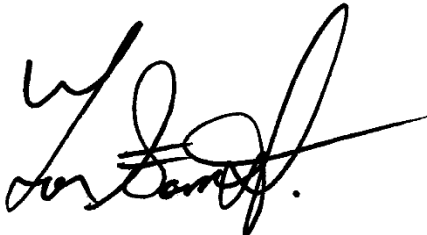
Urban Taskforce Australia urges Inner West Council to prioritise the delivery of new housing supply to meet the needs of its growing population.

Controls in the draft DCP should not be allowed to undermine new housing projects by making development unfeasible or by wrapping up projects in red tape.

We encourage Inner West Council to apply pragmatism to these controls so that it can meet the growing demand for housing within the LGA.

Should you wish to discuss any aspect of this submission further, please call our Head of Policy, Planning and Research, Paul Waterhouse on 0411-875-366 or via email at paul@urbantaskforce.com.au

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Forrest', written in a cursive style.

Tom Forrest
Chief Executive Officer