

# A QUICK GUIDE TO THE LABOR PLAN FOR HOUSING



**WHAT ARE THEY?** - a series of proposed State Environmental Planning Policies (SEPPs) which will radically increase density across the Six Cities Regions of NSW.

**The TOD SEPP** - Transport Oriented Development (TOD) SEPP will rezone land for 1200m around 8 priority transit hubs and allow 6 storey Residential Flat Buildings (RFBs) for 400m around 31 railway/metro stations.

**Mid Rise Housing Policy** (likely to be a SEPP) will allow Residential Flat Buildings (6 storeys) within a 400m radius of town centres and 4 storeys within 800m of town centres (centres which contain services such as supermarkets shops and restaurant).

All the above is overlaid by the **Housing SEPP**. Changes recently made to the Housing SEPP allow a 20 - 30% increase in height if 10 - 15% of Floor Space Ratio (FSR) is set aside for affordable housing (but only set aside for 15 years).

Concerns with the 2024 Labor Plan include a) that the quality and livability of housing will decline, b) tree cover and green spaces will be reduced, and c) there will be little increase in affordable housing.



**Kur-ring-gai Council** have produced these graphic images to demonstrate what eventually happens to an urban block once the effect of the increased floor space ratios (FSRs) are implemented. Planners say the FSR will result in 4 – 6 story buildings built with little set back from the street or side and rear boundaries. There will be almost no space left for green space (trees).

**TRANSPORT ORIENTED DEVELOPMENT (TOD) IS WELCOME HERE!** - TOD is not a new idea. It makes sense to cluster more dense development around railway and metro stations. Well designed medium density housing can be environmentally and socially sustainable. We need more well designed development.

The problem for the 2024 Labor Plan is the heavy-handed approach that overrides local councils, good design, the provision of infrastructure and tree canopy. The quality of housing under the 2024 Labor Plan will be worse than under current plans and there will be no increase in affordability.

TODs can also lead to gentrification and result in the wealthiest having the best access to public transport. Good TOD development includes publicly owned affordable housing. Under these 2024 Labor Plans not a single publicly owned affordable dwelling is proposed.

# SUNLIGHT

The City of Sydney have produced graphics which illustrate the effect of the 2024 Labor Plans when combining the FSR, lack of setbacks, reduced ability for a Council to require good design and orientation, and the proposed changes to the Apartment Design Guidelines.

Waverley Council have projected the impact on Bondi Beach (which is a location already dominated by residential flat buildings and medium density developments). The important factor to note in this illustration of the light grey which shows the 30% increase in height when supposedly providing affordable housing for 15 years.

Submission to Explanation of Intended Effect: Changes to create low-and mid-rise housing

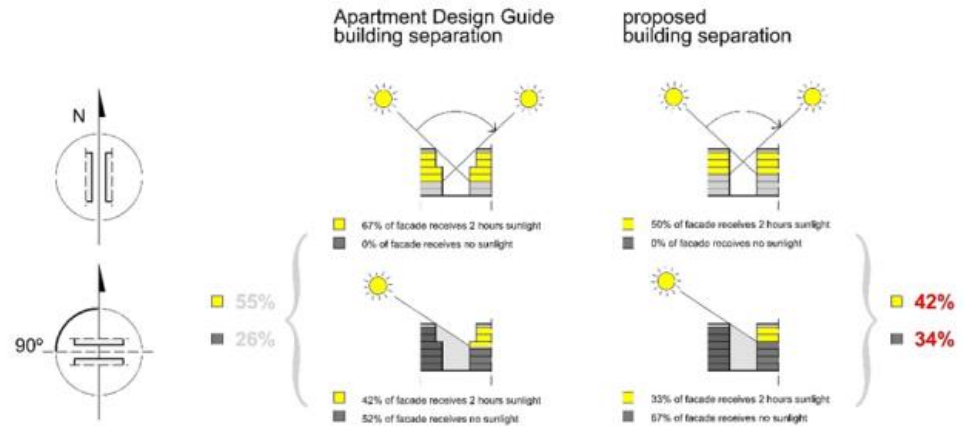


Figure 11: Campbell Parade looking North – further realisation of development.



In Sydney suburbs of terrace housing (with a relatively high density of population) a typical FSR of 0.8:1 or 0.9:1 applies. E.g. a small terrace on 150m<sup>2</sup> is two stories making up approx. 120-130m<sup>2</sup> with a small backyard for sunlight, clothes drying, companion animals and entertaining. The 2024 Labor Plan for mid rise housing applies a FSR of 3:1 on the same small block within 400m of stations or town centres and 2:1 FSR within 400-800m, with no minimum lot size.

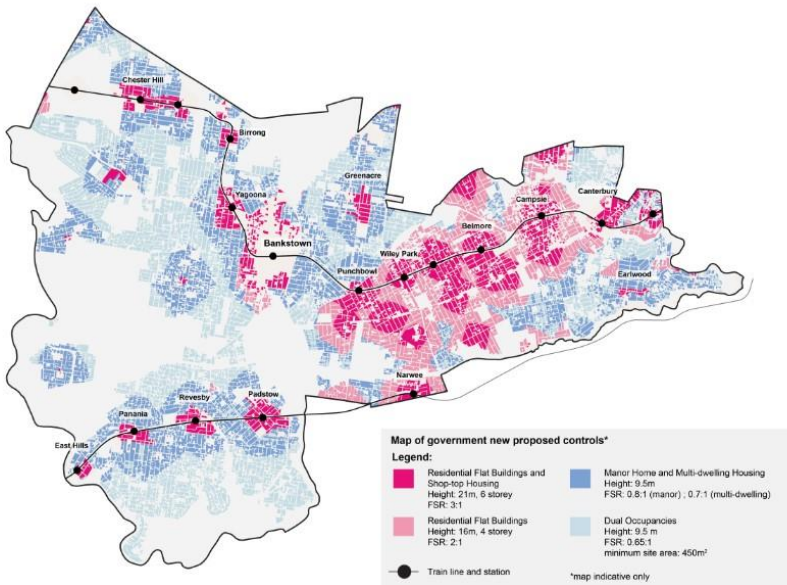


# It's the combination of SEPPs that is the knockout.

## Where will the new planning controls apply?

The planning controls will apply across a substantial portion of the City. Council has prepared an indicative map to show residents these changes.

This map is based on an interpretation of the information provided by the NSW Government and should not be used to understand the impact on individual properties.



When combined the TOD, Mid Rise Policy and Housing SEPPs cover an extraordinary extent of urban Sydney. The images below from Kur-ring-gai (right) and Bankstown (left), demonstrate the spatial extent of the Labor Plan. This is repeated across the Six Cities.

A concern with the 2024 Labor Plan is the reduction in green space and tree canopy. Hopes of achieving 40% tree canopy cover through Sydney will disappear under the plan.

Kur-ring-gai Council have estimated that full application of the Mid Rise SEPP will result in the loss of 32,000 trees. Kur-ring-gai engaged an ecologist to assess the impact of the 2024 Labor Plan. The ecologist estimated the Council area could lose 162ha of Critically Endangered

Blue Gum High Forest, and 217ha of Sydney Turpentine Ironbark Forest.

Councils have urged the Minns Government to drop the FSR ratios as a non-refusal criteria and use only height as they consider the likely planning outcomes to be very poor.

## The Labor SEPPs will not build a single publicly owned affordable dwelling!

The Labor Plan is all about leaving it to the market, the Plan itself does not propose to build any public affordable housing.

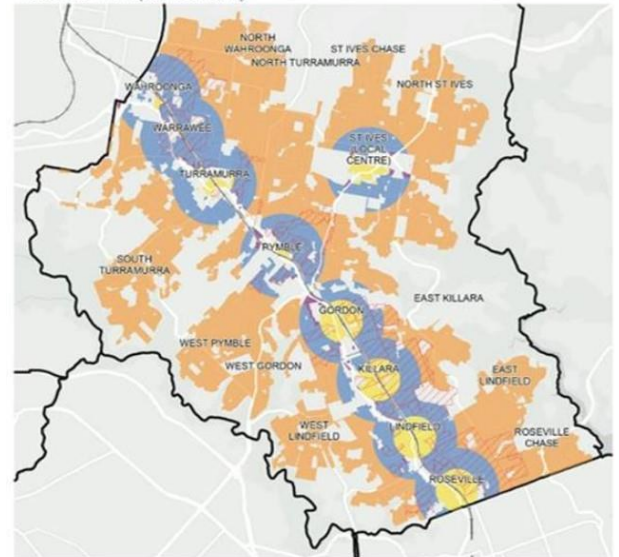
The Housing SEPP gives developers a bonus of up to 30% extra height and floor space if they provide 15% of FSR to affordable housing but only for 15 years, after which it can then revert to full market rent.

The TOD SEPP claims it will provide 15% affordable housing in perpetuity in the 8 precincts but will only mandate 2% in the 400m around the next 31 stations. The Mid Rise Policy does not mandate any affordable housing but will be eligible for the 30% bonus in height and floor space in the Housing SEPP if it provides 15% affordable housing for 15 years.

The Labor Plan is more likely to deliver poor quality apartments and have little effect on housing affordability than it is to ease the housing crisis. The City of Sydney states the Labor Plan breaks its commitment to the National Housing Accord as it has not worked with local government to prepare the plan<sup>1</sup>.

## Kur-ring-gai Local Government Area

\*Please note: This map is indicative only.



<sup>1</sup> City of Sydney submission, February 2024

# Housing is a Human Right

The solutions to providing adequate and affordable housing are clear and obvious but the current Government doesn't want us to see them.



1. We know that Councils approve more housing than is built<sup>2</sup>. Developers do not act on approvals until they are assured of a big enough profit. It suits developers to have high prices so why would we think leaving it to the market would provide affordable housing?

2. Why doesn't the Labor Plan just **build enough public housing and take the heat out of the rental market and the stress out of living** for a large chunk of the population?

3. The Albanese Government needs to **phase out negative gearing and halve the capital gains tax discount**. The subsidies represent a **\$38.9 billion**

**dollars in tax concessions to property owners** and make property investment attractive to the already wealthy.

4. **Legislate for a rent freeze and provide for only capped CPI increases after that.**

**There is a solution to the housing crisis...**

**...but it is not one that will be led by property developers and bad planning**

## The Labor Plan applies to the Six Cities area

From Kiama in the south to Port Stephens in the north, inclusive of Shoalhaven, Blue Mountains and Cessnock local government areas.

### What can you do?

It's never too late to email your local Councillor, State and Federal members.

**[Make a submission to the Upper House Inquiry by 28 March 2024.](#)**

James Ryan, March 2024



<sup>2</sup> <https://www.planningportal.nsw.gov.au/greater-sydney-urban-development-program>