

Shelter NSW Submission

Local Strategic Planning Statement for Port Macquarie-Hastings 'Shaping our Future 2040' (August 2020)



Introduction

Shelter NSW appreciates the opportunity to comment on the Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) (August 2020). We congratulate Council on the report and support many of the proposed Actions outlined which aim to deliver housing choice in the context of a sustainable future.

From Shelter NSW's perspective, the LSPS process is an opportunity to promote dialogue about ways to deliver homes that meet the needs of all NSW residents. The purpose of this submission is to advocate for housing outcomes that address the longer-term systemic housing needs of both regional and urban communities. Having reviewed the Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings LSPS, Shelter NSW has provided practical policy suggestions that we feel might support or strengthen the housing-related priorities outlined in your document.

Our submission also provides a short overview of Shelter NSW's role as the NSW State peak body in the housing policy and advocacy space and a summary of the key messages we recently heard during our community and stakeholder consultation sessions across NSW on what a desirable housing system should deliver.

About Shelter NSW

Shelter NSW was established in 1975, as the NSW State Housing peak body to advocate for better housing outcomes in response to urban and regional redevelopment pressures. We grew from this to now representing the interests of a diverse network of partners and members who include organisations and individuals that share our vision of a secure home for all NSW residents. We pursue this vision through critical engagement with policy and collaborative leadership initiatives.

Below are the key messages from Shelters NSW State wide consultation process.

1. Make plans that emphasise housing as a home, not just an investment.
2. Build places and communities, not just houses and towers.
3. Provide diverse housing that everyone can afford, not just high-income earners.
4. Make renting a genuine alternative to ownership, not just a transition phase.
5. Use housing policy to address climate change, not exacerbate it.

Shelter NSW Comments on Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings LSPS

Major regional centres across NSW are primarily dominated by freestanding housing stock, with a significant percentage of homes occupied by 'empty nesters', many of whom have reached retirement age. This, combined with a younger population often looking for alternative lifestyle and housing options, creates unique difficulties for the regional cities to solve.

The following section provides feedback to several proposed housing-related planning priorities in the Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings LSPS. Our submission aims to provide feedback on ways to support or strengthen the identified strategic priorities related to “our environment” and “our place” outlined in your Draft report. In situations where our suggestions go beyond the direct control of Council, we are happy to collaborate with the Council in any future advocacy-based actions.

Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings LSPS Housing Related Priorities and Shelter NSW Recommendations

PLANNING PRIORITY 6

Use a place-based approach to shape the development of our sites, streetscapes, precincts, villages, towns and centres

The overwhelming trend in regional NSW is to rezone rural land to residential. This has delivered residential developments dominated by three-and four-bedrooms dwellings on the urban fringes. To ensure a better balance of dwelling mix, substantial incentives will be required to support both future and current populations.

Shelter NSW sees using a place-based approach for new residential developments, based on clustering dwelling patterns, as one way to deliver healthier long-term housing outcomes that improve social connection. This also has the benefit of reducing the impact of climate change and natural hazards.

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Maintain and encourage housing supply in the right locations

The following recommendations aim to support the delivery of homes that meet the needs of younger residents and deliver alternative housing options for older residents to age in place:

- increase housing choice in the form of more townhouses, villas and apartments connected to existing centres and essential infrastructure,
- deliver infill development that aims to revitalise established residential areas,
- close the mismatch between current and future housing needs by supporting ways to deliver seniors housing in locations close to town and village centres (taking into consideration land and environmental constraints)
- aim to deliver more housing diversity as part of any CBD or 'town centre' master planning process,
- introduce more medium-density (R3) zones within town centres.

Recognise affordable housing (including public and community housing) as essential infrastructure

We would also encourage the Council to support the recognition of affordable housing (including public and community housing) as essential infrastructure in any future planning document (This definition is from the Australian Infrastructure Audit 2019). This recognition acknowledges the essential relationship between infrastructure, jobs, services, open space, public transport and affordable housing supply.

PLANNING PRIORITY 7

Provide for a diversity of housing in the right locations

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Shelter NSW suggests that the Council create incentives to encourage more housing diversity across the LGA and support pathways to deliver different dwelling types. These types of initiatives are essential given that any addition dwellings would represent a small percentage of change against the current dominant stand-alone dwelling stock over the next fifteen years.

Incentives to encourage greater housing diversity

Shelter NSW recommends that Council consider the development of precinct plans linked to expanding housing choice in key precincts connected with essential services. Such services include shopping centre facilities, educational and University facilities, medical facilities and transport infrastructure.

Mandate bedroom Mix

One effective incentive would be the inclusion of a mandated mix of dwelling and bedroom types for new developments connected to town centres in the DCP.

The Council could consider mandating for a proportion of new dwellings to have a certain number of bedrooms in strategic centres (for example, mandate for 10% of new dwellings in strategic centres to be one or two bedrooms).

PLANNING PRIORITY 8

Create vibrant public places that inspire social interaction and support community wellbeing

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Support social interaction and community wellbeing by addressing the longer-term impact of Covid 19 and the need for people to access affordable housing options

In response to the economic disparities resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, Shelter NSW would like Council to consider the significant impact of affordable housing options on community wellbeing. Increasing delivery of affordable housing will support those members of the community who have decreased job security resulting from Covid 19.

The pandemic has highlighted the inequality between essential workers with secure employment and those without. We have seen the growth of a highly casualised workforce, and a growth in insecure employment. The impacts of Covid 19 will see an increasing need for many key workers without secure employment need access to affordable housing options over the coming years.

In response to these issues, Shelter NSW recommends that Council develop a local housing strategy that contains way to support the delivery of affordable housing option across the LGA.

Caravan Parks- Land Lease Communities

As Council may be aware, the legal rights of tenants in residential parks, caravan parks and manufactured home estates (land leases communities) differ depending on the individual agreement framework for each facility. Generally, there is little security for renters, especially older and more vulnerable residents living in these arrangements, they often face rent increases, water fees, energy costs, no grounds evictions and an inability to modify

their homes. In response to this, Shelter NSW recommends that Council develop a local housing strategy that contains ways to support these communities.

PLANNING PRIORITY 9

Preserve and enhance the distinctive character, size and scale of our towns, villages and rural communities

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Maintain Local Built Form Character Through Best Practice Design Outcomes

To ensure that any new, infill or residential developments enhance the existing build form of regional cities, main streets and town centres, Shelter NSW recommends the Council develop local character assessment requirements that include particular design elements for its DCP and Master plans proposals. In line with this initiative, we suggest that Council might like to review the following two documents; 'Implementing Good Design' and Evaluating Good Design (2018) by NSW Governments Architect (<https://www.governmentarchitect.nsw.gov.au/guidance/implementing-good-design>)

PLANNING PRIORITY 10

Protect, respect and embrace our natural, built and cultural heritage (including our Aboriginal heritage)

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Acknowledge and Support for Local Aboriginal Land the Council to delivery additional housing opportunities

Shelter NSW would like to see a commitment by the Council to work with the Local Aboriginal Land the Council on the development of a strategic plan for their landholders aimed at supporting the delivery of additional housing opportunities.

The primary aim would be to support additional housing opportunities and appropriate housing design outcomes on Aboriginal owned land. This work can be based on the Aboriginal Land Framework (introduced by the NSW Planning System in 2019).

Proposed Actions:

- work cooperatively with LALC to rezone land so that it can be used for additional social housing,
- explore ways to support secondary dwellings/granny flat accommodation on existing Aboriginal/social housing lots,
- encourage the construction of additional Aboriginal social housing stock so that the underutilisation of existing housing and essential service can be addressed,
- work with public, community and Aboriginal housing providers to ensure dwellings are adequately maintained to improve the survivability of structures under bushfire or drought threat.

PLANNING PRIORITY 3

Increase our community's resilience by identifying, mitigating and adapting to the impacts and risks of natural hazards, social and environmental change

Shelter NSW Recommendations

Housing Development that builds resilience to climate change impacts

In line with the stated planning priority, we suggest that Council encourage clustered development patterns with the aim of consolidating landscaping and vegetation, reducing

the risk of bushfire/floods and facilitating the delivery of better water management practices. Connected to these consolidation initiatives, we recommend that new residential fringe or semiurban release development areas be based on the General Residential (R1) zones combined with bush fire and flood management criteria as opposed to Low-Density or large lot residential subdivision zones.

Reducing climate change impacts

To build resilience to the changing climate, Shelter NSW suggest that Council and the NSW Government work together, particularly in regional NSW, to deliver green landscape spaces combined with an active tree planting and employment initiatives.

Thank you

Shelter NSW appreciates the opportunity to the Draft Port Macquarie-Hastings Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS) (August 2020). We hope that the comments and insights we have provided bring some value to Council's strategic planning work in the housing policy space.

We are also happy to engage with the Council on the issues raised in our submission. If you wish to discuss our submission in more detail, please contact Stacey Miers on 0410 633 272 or by email at stacey@sheltersnsw.org.au.

Sincerely Yours,

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