KELLIE SLOANE MP
MEMBER FOR VAUCLUSE

The Hon. Paul Scully MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces
52 Martin Place
SYDNEY NSW 2000

28 April 2025

Dear Minister,

RE: LOW-AND MID-RISE HOUSING REFORMS

Firstly, let me begin by saying I support efforts to improve the supply of affordable housing in Sydney - in well-designed developments close to public transport and utilities.

This is why I have supported Woollahra Council's Edgecliff strategy that includes a new 26-storey apartment tower over the train station. I also support additional uplift around Bondi Junction which is well served by public transport.

However, I am concerned about the consequences of new low and mid-rise housing reforms on some suburbs in my electorate, which are already heavily populated, are disconnected from reliable public transport and already experiencing stress on public utilities. These suburbs include Rose Bay and Double Bay.

Increased flooding, electricity grid stress, sewage overflows from century old pipes, and dangerous congestion on our roads slowing access to emergency services, are current realities in our electorate which will be exacerbated by unplanned development.

Developers are taking advantage of the new regulations by buying up rows of family homes with plans to build 6-storey luxury apartments with multi-million-dollar price tags.

Essential workers and young people will not benefit from these planning changes which reward developers and the rich – and which will irreversibly change the character and amenity of beautiful established suburbs already under pressure.

I ask that you please consider the feedback from my community – as well as correspondence from Woollahra Council which provides facts to support a reconsideration of these provisions.

I support the Council's request for a temporary removal of Rose Bay and Double Bay as designated town centres, while flood studies are conducted, and important infrastructure considerations are brought to your attention.

I fear that if these reforms continue, the financial burden on the Government and utilities to repair, maintain and upgrade facilities, to improve school capacity and roads,

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to compensate for flood damage and other unintended consequences of these changes, will far outweigh any purported benefit of new luxury development.

I am happy to be part of thoughtful and constructive discussions around appropriate uplift and hope you will consider the feedback I have provided below.

Community Feedback

Correspondence and in-person feedback from constituents has been significant and falls broadly into the following categories:

Roads & Public Transport

There is no train or light rail service east of Edgecliff, and the three main arterial roads in our electorate are already narrow, congested, and operating beyond capacity. Overcrowding of buses is well documented. Opportunities to increase services are limited due to congestion. Congestion is not just an inconvenience – it becomes dangerous for our community due to difficult access by emergency services to the far-reaches of our peninsula in areas such as Dover Heights, Vaucluse and Watsons Bay.

Electricity grid capacity

According to Woollahra Council developers have been advised by Ausgrid the electricity grid cannot even cope with basic air-conditioning needs in new developments, and developers have requested to install and use gas. This demonstrates a system under extreme stress. Already electricity sub stations are being built near public footpaths across Waverley and Woollahra council areas, but this is a game of whack-a-mole when it comes to plugging electricity shortfalls.

Existing density

80% of the Vaucluse electorate is already mid-to-high density. 66.4% of the electorate is living in flats and apartments. Communal open space is limited. We embrace the dynamic nature of our high-density community, but the real issue again comes back to public transport given there is no train line east of Edgecliff, and the bus services are becoming increasingly unreliable.

The community is asking a reasonable question: **what new infrastructure investments will the Government deliver to support the additional population density being imposed on them?**

Affordability:
Many residents, especially young Australians, and key workers, have expressed scepticism about the claim that these reforms will lead to more affordable housing locally. Given the high land values in suburbs such as Rose Bay and Double Bay, and the substantial additional costs associated with design and construction, the community is rightly asking: **how exactly will these reforms deliver genuinely affordable housing outcomes in the eastern suburbs?**

Home ownership must remain an achievable aspiration for young Australians. I support sensible higher-density development in our electorate, but it must be accompanied by genuine community consultation, properly sequenced infrastructure delivery, and clear evidence that the policy will achieve its stated objectives.

Minister - I would appreciate the opportunity to meet with you during the next Parliamentary sitting to discuss these issues in person and convey further feedback from my community.

I look forward to your response and the opportunity to work collaboratively to ensure we deliver the best outcomes for our community and for Sydney's future.

Yours sincerely,

Kellie Sloane

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