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● TIGHT-KNIT COMMUNITY

Sydney, where the living is squeezezy

Cathy Morris

IF you want to live in a land of sweeping plains, steer clear of Sydney. New ABS figures show inner-city Sydney is the most densely populated area of the country.

While you still won't find people being squashed on to the trains as they are in Tokyo, city residents are more likely to live in close quarters, where they can

overhear their neighbours arguing or doors being slammed.

Top of the list for high-density living are Pyrmont-Ultimo, Potts Point-Woolloomooloo, Darlinghurst and Surry Hills.

Each has a population density of more than 13,000 residents per square kilometre.

The next highest-density region was inner-city Melbourne, with 10,100 people per square kilometre.

It's a sign Australians are living a different lifestyle to the past and have moved away from the "quarter-acre" block, UNSW City Futures Research Centre director Prof Bill Randolph said.

But he said when it came to apartment living, Australia remained well behind many Asian, North American and European cities.

"If you think of 30-storey tower blocks backed up against

each other, we are not there yet," he said.

Randolph said with 70 per cent of Australians now living in five cities, high-density would become even more common.

"Developers are building lots of high-rise, and if you want to live in Sydney that's where you go."

He said Sydney inner-city residents are typically professionals or students who rent.