Creating a socially sustainable higher density Sydney

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Objectives

• What are the likely social outcomes of the push to a compact city? Who will live in the 420,000 new higher density homes?

• Background – Polarising Sydney

• Social segregation by urban design – the legacy of three decades of urban consolidation

• What is the evidence?

• More of the same?

• The policy challenge: creating social sustainable higher density urban renewal
Two key assumptions:
• Socially sustainable communities are more socially balanced
• Socially sustainable communities are more inclusive

Three key social trends in Australian cities:
• Continued growth in population and economic role of cities
• The demographic transition – smaller and older households
• Social polarisation

Implications for socially sustainable cities?
Sydney’s social divide – the starting point for the Metro Strategy?

ABS Index of Social Disadvantage 2001
The suburbanisation of disadvantage
Proportional change in 1971 and 2001 LGA unemployment rates compared to the Sydney average
Growing regional imbalances – the impact on local incomes
Proportional change in 1981 and 2001 median household incomes compared to the Sydney median
Spatial polarisation is intensifying...
Change in the Proportion of CDs that are Severely Disadvantaged by LGA, Sydney 1996-2001
The housing revolution is upon us:
Estimated increase in attached dwellings to 2030 in Sydney
(Source: Derived from Census and DIPNR Media Release December 2004)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total dwellings 2001</td>
<td>1,420,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total attached dwellings 2001</td>
<td>482,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of attached dwellings 2001</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase in attached dwellings 1991-2001</td>
<td>122,048</td>
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<tr>
<td>Av annual increase in attached dwellings 1991 to 2001</td>
<td>12,205</td>
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<tr>
<td>Estimated total dwellings 2030</td>
<td>1,997,235</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated total attached dwellings 2030</td>
<td>900,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proportion of Attached Dwellings 2030</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimated increase in attached dwellings 2001 to 2030</td>
<td>418,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% increase in attached dwellings by 2030</td>
<td>87%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Av. Annual increase in attached dwellings 2001 to 2030</td>
<td>13.933</td>
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</table>
580,000 new households in Sydney by 2030 – 70% by urban renewal
Future dwelling growth in the next 25-30 years by sub-region
(Source: DIPNR Media Release December 2004)
Higher density housing...
Investor driven and only fit for the smaller household
Flats are family un-friendly

Sydney: household type by dwelling type, 2001
Spatial segmentation in the higher density market in Sydney: Flats for DINKs and Empty Nesters

33% couple only
10% income <$400
44% income > $1500
42% fully owned
31% rental
36% overseas born
59% Managers/Professionals
3% adults unemployed
And Flats for Battlers......

43% families with kids
43% income <$400
3% income > $1500
70% rental
36% no car
80% overseas born
9% Managers/ Professionals
24% adults unemployed
Local variation in higher density submarkets:
Tenure profiles in 12 Sydney sub-markets
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Mobility in 12 Sydney sub-markets

% Moved in 5 yrs
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Income profiles in 12 Sydney sub-markets
Local variation in higher density submarkets: Families in 12 Sydney sub-markets

% Couple Family with Children

Sydney City, Manly, Penrith, Cronulla, North Sydney, Chatswood, Parramatta, Hornsby, Homebush Bay, Falfield, Hillsdale, Liverpool, Sydney SD
Local variation in higher density submarkets:
Overseas Born in 12 Sydney sub-markets

% Born Overseas

Cronulla  | Penneth | Homebush Bay | Manly | North Sydney | Sydney City | Hornsby | Chatswood | Hillsdale | Parramatta | Liverpool | Fairfield | Sydney SD
Implications for the planning and housing system?

• Future metropolitan growth will depend on the perceptions and behaviour of residential investors.

• How many more households are there waiting to take up the supply of rental flats? Is the numbers game too simplistic?

• Or will home buyers step in? What will that mean for design quality and amenity across the sector?

• Will smaller households retain their preference for house property?

• Will the sector remain as transitory accommodation for most?

• How do we get rid of old blocks and who decides when they should go?

• Are we building socially polarised cities based on dwelling type and size – and does this matter?
Implications for social stability and community building

• Communal living – close physical proximity to neighbours

• Physical constraints (e.g. adjoining apartments, small apartments, shared facilities, noise)

• Many neighbours are transitory and do not associate with the property

• Strata management as the new urban governance?

• Communal governance – how well do body corporates work? What are the problems? And do we solve them?

• *Building Quality* and *Successful Governance* structures holds the key to successful strata living – and for the future of high density cities

• *Essential to get both these right across the sector* – but are we?
Implications for achieving socially sustainable higher density urban communities?

• Are higher density developments social sustainable (balanced) and suitable as long term housing – because that what the growth implies?

• How do you build community in places where renters ‘churn’ through?

• Will higher density ever be child friendly? We will have to build more flats suitable for families – i.e. bigger (And can they ever be ‘youth’ friendly?)

• Or will high density housing ever be much more than Gen X/Y dormitories, empty nests or bottom rung owners and renters?

• Will there be a major change in who buys flats – should home ownership prevail over investors? Will Australia ever have a stable high density sector?

• Location – are town centres, rail stations and main roads appropriate places to cram flats? And what about open space – especially for the “fur families”

• What do we do about the proto-slums? Who deals with the social fallout?
Creating vibrant and sustainable cities for future generations – four principles

• Avoid cramming more two bed flats into low amenity town centres or road corridors

• Plan for a mix of housing types in centres and suburbs to support mixed communities and at moderate densities

• Get the design and the governance right across the market – not just in high value locations

• Provide housing at a range of prices, including affordable housing options for rent and sale
New Strategies for Higher Density Urban Renewal: A proposal

Six key components for a new community based Urban Renewal Program – bringing planning, housing and social interventions together:

- Local Renewal Strategies in Target Areas
- Local Renewal Masterplans – part of the LEP process
- Local Renewal Corporations or Trusts
- Local Renewal Fund
- Affordable Housing Investment Strategies
- Integrated Place Focused Policy Framework

Local, State or Federal Government could set up this framework
Higher density cities ..... Planner’s dream?
…..or planner’s nightmare?
Porsche today.....
.... gone tomorrow?
Higher density heaven .....
.... or higher density hell?
The vision for some .....
.... the reality for many
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