

Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan

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Submission content: Dear Commissioners I welcome the opportunity to make a submission on the Draft Greater Sydney Region Plan and revised District Plans. I'd like to share my personal experience of the crisis in affordable housing in Sydney and the stress this has placed on me to highlight the issue and the need for urgent action on real targets for affordable housing in the Greater Sydney Plan so that people like me don't become a part of the homeless statistic in the not so distant future. I moved back to Sydney 9 years ago when the State Government project funding for the Hunter Community Council ran out after 6 years and I became unemployed. I was too specialized in my sector - community services, to find a comparable job in the Hunter so the only choice open to me was to find a similar role in a regional community forum in Sydney and move cities. I was fortunate because unlike many other mature age Australians who find themselves unemployed in their late 40's, I didn't become unemployable; I was able to secure employment in my preferred field of community work and made the difficult decision to move back to Sydney after 25 years in Newcastle. The transition to living in Sydney was challenging because my adult children and parents were not making that move with me which meant I would need to build a whole new network of like minded people and significant others to establish my new life.

Fortunately I'm a friendly and civic minded socially inclined person so this hasn't been as challenging as I'd imagined and I now have a small circle of friends as well as a larger network of like minded people drawn from my social and faith communities and my new life is firmly grounded in this city, Sydney. The biggest challenge I've faced since the move has been the stress of being locked out of stable and suitable housing suited to my needs as a mature adult in my 50's. Home ownership in Sydney is beyond my reach, not only can I not afford to purchase a suitable property close enough to my place of work, I'm unable to establish stability in relation to where I live. The unbelievably high cost of private rental in Sydney has meant that I have moved 6 times in 9 years and each time, it's been further and further away from my place of work and from the things that matter - my friendship and social networks and my faith community as well as the Harbour Bridge, that important gateway to the North and access to my family network in Newcastle. Each of my moves since moving to Sydney have been directly related to the housing crisis and lack of affordability of private rental compounded by the lack of tenure of private rental under the current Tenancy Legislation. Each time the lease expired, be it a 6 month or 12 month lease, the landlord raised the rent to such an extent it became untenable on my wages as a Community Worker and I found myself scrambling to find a suitable place to rent a little bit further out of the region my work is based and where I began 9 years ago - the Inner West. My decision to live in the Inner West seemed simple and realistic 9 years ago, it was close to work, close to a Buddhist Centre of my lineage and close enough to the gateway to the North to make the regular trips back to Newcastle to visit my family relatively pleasant. As the housing crisis in Sydney has become more critical and entrenched, the housing market has created 2 distinct classes of people - those who can exploit the market through their ownership of property and those who depend on it for a place to call home, for their shelter, but are locked out of the affordability, security, livability and stability of a place called home. The current housing market in Sydney doesn't just impact on low income people or welfare dependent families, it affects

people like me - single professional employed women in their 50's in private rental that's unaffordable, unsafe, unstable, untenured and poorly maintained. The market has been created by a lack of political will on the part of governments to do what they're elected to do - govern for the good of all, not just a select few. It's supported greed and exploitation on the part of landlords and their agents, i say this based on personal experience. The attitude I've struck in Sydney is very different to that of Newcastle where i lived for more then 25 years and where I still happen to have a mortgage, my modest home which is still mortgaged in Newcastle, is rented out to a single mother of 2 young adults and she has lived there for the last 3 years without having her rent raised every 6 months. In fact, I would be foolish to raise the rent because I have a tenant who pays her rent on time and looks after the property and treats it as 'home' which is what I'd like to do if I could. Please instigate realistic targets for affordable rental and change the tenancy legislation in the Greater Sydney Plan Yours sincerely Asha Ramzan