MEDIA RELEASE

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Affordable Housing Forum releases Communique on actions and solutions

That Sydney is the second-most unaffordable city in the world was not lost on close to 200 people who came together to discuss practical solutions to the chronic underinvestment in social and affordable Housing crisis in Sydney.

Diverse participants from all levels of government, development industry, community housing sector, NGOs, private sector, urban development and planning professionals, and housing researchers were in attendance and worked collaboratively to develop a Communique on Affordable Housing. The Hon Anthony Roberts MP, Minister for Planning, Minister for Housing and Special Minister of State opened the conference and looks forward to the outcome of the forum and recommendations.

Recent studies show that as of 2017, 373,000 households in NSW cannot get into housing at market rates or are under rental stress and this will increase to 670,000 households by 2025[1]. Meanwhile, though more than 5,000 dwellings per year of social and affordable housing are required in Sydney, only 10,000 are planned for the next 20 years.

The Forum presenters and participants provided a wealth of information, experience, and ideas that informed the Communique on Affordable Housing. The key issues raised in the Communique include:

- Recognise and approach affordable housing as essential infrastructure for a sustainable, inclusive and productive city
- Designate the Sydenham-Bankstown Corridor as a priority target area for affordable housing in the Central and South Districts which should be subject to a Growth Infrastructure Compact agreement
- Important to adopt a consensus position around capturing an even share of value uplift, through a consistent policy that is clear and transparent for the development community
- Planning mechanism changes to allow for greater affordable housing provision
- Establishment of a bond aggregator model is supported to enable access to lower cost finance
- New approach needed for the “missing middle” to promote the idea of small dwellings, intergenerational, and affordable housing rental options

Participants were highly engaged throughout the Forum, with Cr Sally Betts, President of Southern Sydney Regional Organisation of Councils (SSROC) noting “how important it was to have local government, community housing providers, and developers all working together in the same room to develop solutions to such a critical issue”.

Cr Betts emphasised the need to “enable councils to include a mandatory requirement for affordable housing in their Local Environmental Plans where there is land value uplift to support its application.”

John Brockhoff, Principal Policy Officer at the Planning Institute of Australia stated that “there is an opportunity to streamline contributions for affordable housing using a single model code.”

Wendy Hayhurst, CEO of NSW Federation of Housing Associations, said that it was important to “ensure that housing created through the planning system are dedicated as affordable rental housing in perpetuity, and managed by a registered Community Housing Provider.”

“Government needs to recognise that there are many working households for whom home ownership is currently well out of reach. These households need secure affordable rental housing if they are to contribute to Sydney’s continued growth.” said Ms Hayhurst.

More information: http://ssroc.nsw.gov.au/planning-and-advocacy/affordable-housing-forum-2017/

Media contact and for images: SSROC Program & Advocacy Officer Kate Toohey on 0410 349 133 or email kate.toohey@ssroc.nsw.gov.au

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[1] Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute report