

Mr Greg Doyle
General Manager
Wollongong City Council
Locked Bag 8821
WOLLONGONG DC NSW 2500

Our ref:MDPE23/1313
Your ref:24152784

Dear Mr Doyle

Thank you for sending the Wollongong Housing Strategy (WHS) and Wollongong Retail and Business Centres Strategy (WRBCS) to the Department of Planning and Environment for endorsement.

I would like to congratulate Council on its excellent work in finalising both of these strategies. Please note that this letter relates only to the Housing Strategy. We have undertaken separate review processes for each of the documents and will provide a response to the Retail and Business Centre Strategy shortly.

I acknowledge the significant work that has gone into the development of the WHS, including the Wollongong Housing Review, Housing Our Communities Discussion Paper, and the draft Housing and Affordable Housing Options Paper. The resulting WHS is an action focused document that identifies 70 strategies/actions across themes such as affordable housing, social housing, advocacy and education. It also clearly identifies and prioritises the legislative and policy changes required to implement these actions.

I note that a number of the strategies/actions will require amendments to the Wollongong Local Environmental Plan 2009. It is important to note that the overarching endorsement of the WHS is not a pre-emptive endorsement of any specific planning proposal, each of which will be assessed on its merits and will require appropriate justification. In particular, any proposal seeking a reduction in potential housing yield would need to demonstrate that this would not have a negative impact on housing supply in the region.

I also note that Council amended the draft WHS to remove a proposal to prohibit single dwellings in the R3 Medium Density Residential zone. While I appreciate that decision was taken in response to community concerns, the need to provide housing for everyone in our community means that no options should be off the table without thorough investigation. I strongly encourage Council to revisit this option as part of the future review of R3 lands, to deliver medium density housing in the R3 zone rather than single dwellings on a lot.

With these caveats, the Department is pleased to endorse the WHS as a concise framework that will guide Council's decisions on housing issues over the next 10-20 years. Council is encouraged to balance the timing of actions in the strategy to ensure that there is minimal impact on housing supply.

If you would like to discuss this advice, please contact Graham Towers, Manager, Southern Region on 4247 1821.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. McDonald', with a stylized flourish at the end.

17 July 2023

Malcolm McDonald
Executive Director
Local and Regional Planning