

ATTACHMENT 4

The Hon Paul Scully MP
Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

Ref: IRF23/1420

Clr Peter Gangemi
Mayor
The Hills Shire Council
PO Box 7064
NORWEST NSW 2153
[Via: council@thehills.nsw.gov.au](mailto:council@thehills.nsw.gov.au); Mayor.Gangemi@thehills.nsw.gov.au

Dear Clr Gangemi,

We have a shared responsibility to address the housing crisis and meet the goals of the National Housing Accord, and I want to thank you for the collaborative effort you have made and continue to make on behalf of the communities you represent.

The urgency is real — as we return to strong population growth in challenging market conditions, we are seeing housing pressures impacting housing supply, diversity and diminishing housing choice.

Delivering a fair distribution of housing, jobs, and social and economic infrastructure for the people of NSW is going to take effort from all levels of government.

Our decisions, whether at state or council level, need to be supported by a planning system that makes decisions based on current needs, circumstances, and priorities.

While governments at all levels have undertaken substantial work to implement strategic plans and deliver housing targets, it's clear to me that past strategic plans didn't anticipate or account for the scale of the housing crisis we now face.

The immediate need is for us to make sure the planning system presents no impediment to dwelling approvals and construction in appropriate locations.

I am asking councils and planning panels to factor this into their decision-making and prioritise the delivery of housing when assessing development applications and rezoning schemes, so that the entire planning system is geared to addressing the housing shortfall.

While I await the publication of updated region and cities plans by the Greater Cities Commission, I ask that you and your council teams prioritise the opportunity to deliver homes as part of merit considerations where, on balance, dwelling numbers may warrant a scale or built form that is different to or greater than the outcome originally anticipated.

The [Strategic Merit Test](#) (referenced in the [Local Environmental Plan Making Guideline](#)) exists for such times and provides a framework for responding to a change in circumstances, such as the investment in new infrastructure or changing population and demographic trends.

I do not deny this is a difficult and challenging time, but it is critically important we undertake this shared responsibility and work together to meet that challenge. I look forward to working with each of you to create cities and regions that deliver fair opportunities for all.

Should you have any questions, Malcolm McDonald, Executive Director, Local and Regional Planning, at the Department of Planning and Environment can be contacted on 02 9274 6267.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Paul Scully', written over a faint circular stamp.

Paul Scully MP

Minister for Planning and Public Spaces

5/8/23