



## FACT SHEET

# DEVELOPMENT IN THE SUTHERLAND SHIRE

**JUNE 2024**

### **Why do I feel there are a lot of new apartments and dual occupancies in Sutherland Shire?**

The NSW Government has been encouraging more housing in Sydney to address the housing crisis currently being experienced. Housing is a basic community need.

The Sutherland Shire, like many parts of Sydney, has recently experienced a construction boom. Increased building in the Sutherland Shire is partly due to favourable economic conditions in the past. In 2015-2020, a rising housing market coupled with considerable development potential created by the making of Sutherland Shire Local Environmental Plan 2015, created ideal conditions for development and a corresponding increase in dwelling approvals. As the construction process takes years to commence and construct, many dwellings are now currently nearing completion.

Over decades, housing supply continues to drop. The number of dwellings being built in the area has dropped from a peak in the 1990's - when new release subdivisions (such as Menai), were still being developed.

To accommodate the projected population of 268,050 people by 2041, Sutherland Shire must have capacity for some growth (estimated 22,500 additional dwellings between 2016 and 2041).

Future housing supply must be infill development – redevelopment of existing sites – as there are no greenfield sites for new subdivisions. There are certainly more dual occupancies being built and often these are undertaken as both Development applications and as Complying Development - without a development consent being needed.



There is a positive side to the new development: Our local economy, tradespeople and suppliers all rely on housing construction work.

## How fast is the population is growing?

While housing construction is occurring, compared to many other parts of Sydney, the Sutherland Shire has had only modest population growth. The Department of Planning Housing and Infrastructure recently released population projections for Sutherland Shire (June 2022) indicate that Sutherland Shire is anticipated to experience a low population growth rate of 0.51% per annum between 2021 and 2041. This is a significant change from the historical trend of 0.7% per annum.

Most of the projected population increase is attributed to natural change (births minus deaths), but at a much lower rate than in previous population projections. It is natural population increase, not migration, that is driving future growth in Sutherland Shire.

## Why must the Sutherland Shire accommodate more housing?

Over the next 20 years all parts of Sydney will experience some change. Planning for the growth and needs of local communities is a responsibility of all levels of government. Councils must prepare local housing strategies which deliver housing. This is stipulated by the State Government in Regional and District Plans.

The NSW Government has released 5-year housing completion targets for every council. For the Sutherland Shire, the target is 6,000 additional dwellings over the next 5 years. The targets prioritise more diverse and well-located homes in areas with existing infrastructure capacity. Please refer to the following link:

[Housing targets | Planning \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/housing/housing-targets-planning)

The Federal Government has also flagged its intention to boost the supply of affordable and social housing, and to work with the States to enhance the supply of housing.

It is important that local communities continue to be able to live in the type of housing they need or want, in the areas where they want to be.

## How is Sutherland Shire Council planning for more housing?

Local councils have a responsibility to plan for the community's housing needs and deliver key State and regional planning objectives. Sutherland Shire Council has prepared a Local Strategic Planning Statement (LSPS), summarising planning priorities identified through State, regional, district and local strategic work. The LSPS provides the local context and local-scale expression of actions and priorities from these plans – available here:

[Local Strategic Planning Statement | Sutherland Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/local-strategic-planning-statement-sutherland-shire-council)

An action of the LSPS is to address housing needs by preparing a Housing Strategy. Sutherland Shire Council has consulted the community on the future of housing in the local area. The community wish to keep the low density character of neighbourhoods, but also accommodate medium and higher density housing in appropriate areas. Council is yet to endorse a housing strategy.

A diverse range of housing is required to accommodate the needs of a diverse community. More housing is required both sustain a vibrant community and accommodate the existing population.



There is expected to be an increase in smaller households and more people living alone. By 2036, it is expected that over a quarter of the Sutherland Shire's population will be aged over 60 years. An ageing population typically requires a greater focus on accessibility, personal safety, and opportunities to remain connected to their community. More suitable housing will be required.

At present, Council is preparing detailed place based plans for three centres (Miranda, Sutherland/Kirrawee, and Caringbah) and further centres will follow. Together with the local community, these place plans will provide a shared vision and plan for the centres, and set out a 10 year pathway to achieve that vision. The place based plans will also align infrastructure upgrades (such as open space and community facilities) with population growth and town centre improvements.

Council must find the delicate balance between facilitating this future growth and protecting those elements of the Shire that our community value most.

The community's input will be an important part of getting this process right. Please refer to the Join the Conversation page on Sutherland Shire Council's website [www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au) for upcoming consultations via the following link:

[Join the conversation | Sutherland Shire Council \(nsw.gov.au\)](http://www.sutherlandshire.nsw.gov.au)

## Why is the State Government facilitating more housing development?

Recent State Government housing reforms seek to address the immediate urgency of the housing shortage and create a fairer and more resilient housing market for the future. The reforms will increase the capacity for more low and mid rise housing delivered near transport hubs across Greater Sydney, including Sutherland Shire. Please refer to the NSW Government Planning website for more information on housing reforms, via the following link:

[Diverse and well-located homes | Planning \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.planning.nsw.gov.au/diverse-and-well-located-homes)



These State reforms propose greater density closer to centres and train stations where there is access to existing infrastructure, services, and transport. Further work is required to assess the impacts of these reforms and how these areas are best planned.

## Can existing services and infrastructure support growth?

Managing population growth is a significant challenge, especially when considering the capacity of the existing infrastructure. Council continues to consult with infrastructure providers to understand any constraints and plans for local investment, so infrastructure and services can be aligned with growth.

Many residents are concerned about traffic congestion in the Sutherland Shire. Traffic can only partly be attributed to population growth. Over time our community has become more affluent, and this has seen car ownership rates increase faster than population growth. Because cost is less of a barrier, residents increasingly undertake more trips for shopping, employment, and recreation purposes. As our area takes on a stronger urban character, it is inevitable that there will be further demands for road space and more competition for parking.

Sutherland Shire Council continues to advocate for improvements to the road network. Council's Integrated Transport Strategy also seeks to reduce car dependency and improve the public domain via greater investment in and support of more sustainable modes of transport like walking, cycling and public transport. The Strategy is available to view on Council's website.

[Informing Strategy - Integrated Transport \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au)

## **What about quality?**

Good design, local character and resident amenity are important considerations in the delivery of additional housing stock, particularly in Sutherland Shire where all housing is delivered in established neighbourhoods. Scale, design, views, trees and landscaping are key elements of the LGA's character. These elements are a consideration in developing plans and policies.

## **There seems to be too many cars on the road, parking is too difficult to find, and not enough parking is provided for development?**

Traffic and parking issues are common community concerns. With the rise in affluence in Sutherland Shire over past decades, the rate of car ownership has also increased. Over 91% of homes in Sutherland Shire have one car but more importantly the number of 2 and 3 car households in Sutherland Shire is 20% higher than Greater Sydney. There are certainly more cars competing for road space and this can result in traffic congestion or parking frustration. It has been difficult to convince Sutherland Shire residents to use active or public transport instead.

These issues are addressed in Council's Transport related strategies which include a focus on travel demand management and getting better value out of existing road and parking assets rather than building more of these facilities.

Council is also expanding its active transport network and continues to advocate to TfNSW for improvements to public transport. However, it is challenging to convince the community to use these alternative transport modes to relieve pressure on the road network. In this regard, requiring development to provide greater parking would encourage more car ownership and use of private vehicles, which would in turn increase local traffic and is not considered as a sustainable transport approach. Everyone who drives a car contributes to traffic congestion and parking frustration, so we ask everyone to reconsider their next trip.

## What about affordable housing?

Affordable housing is defined by a State policy. This type of housing has rent set below market price so that it costs less than 30% of gross household income. Affordable housing is needed in the Sutherland Shire. The State has announced recent reforms to facilitate greater affordable housing – link:

[In-fill affordable housing | Planning \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/planning/in-fill-affordable-housing)

Council has considered but not adopted an affordable housing scheme. Further work is required to assess the impacts of these State reforms and ensure that these affordable housing can be feasibly accommodated within the area.

## Who decides what can be built?

Decisions about zoning or what can be built where are usually made by Council and they become policy through a local environmental plan. State policies can override local planning policy.

Decisions about individual developments are made by Council or the State Government depending on their size and nature. Larger, sensitive or contentious developments are determined by planning panels.

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