

Submission to the BCC consultation on proposed car parking changes to improve housing affordability



Sustainable Population Australia (Qld)

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Sustainable Population Australia opposes the Amendment proposal to reduce parking provisions because it will most likely worsen housing affordability, housing standards and quality of life by abetting further population growth.

The amendment broadening the area where developers are not required to provide onsite car parking will shift pressure for car parking onto the streets and beyond. While many people prefer to live near public transport and avoid using a car to commute, most want the freedom to travel to enjoy the great outdoors beyond the city's limits.

The larger question here is whether Brisbane aims to become more like Clayfield or more like Hong Kong. If the total land area of the two is similar, the latter makes much larger demands on the environment beyond the city's limits in order to support a larger population. In comparison, a wealthy neighbourhood like Clayfield has high resource use per person, but the total environmental impact is much lower. How many of us there are and what we do in the city matters to our natural environment, nationally and globally, as demonstrated in Australia's State of the Environment Report: [SOER 2023](#)

More high-rise apartment living disconnects people from natural assets that contribute to good health, such as greenery, clean air and open spaces. The Amendment facilitates the development of the city in the opposite direction to which most people aspire to; a comfortable home with at least some garden and a car in the garage.

We acknowledge with regret that Australia's population growth makes this 'Australian dream' inaccessible for many people and requires cities to provide for some high-density living. However, enabling this densification should not be presented as a solution. In effect, it is an admission of failure: that the future quality of life for many Australians must be lower than in the past, at least with respect to the personal space each of us can call home.

Will reducing parking provision improve housing affordability? The amendment will free up some off-street space for more accommodation, which will increase the number of residents and the number of commuters. This slight increase in supply is unlikely to hold unit prices down, let alone affect house prices. More likely it will draw more people into the area which will put upward pressure on prices. In fact, any change in affordability will only be achieved by changing the composition of housing stock, skewing it to the lowest-value housing (by definition, offering lower amenity). An apartment with no parking provision will (all else equal) achieve a lower market price

than one with a car parking space. However, ensuring that more of the new housing stock lacks parking spaces will push up the price of those apartments with parking.

If the aim is to fit more dwellings on a site, this will be unlikely to make housing more affordable because it will perpetuate the rapid growth of Australia's population. By not accelerating the creation of housing, pressure is placed on the federal government to lower immigration rates and slow population growth. Only by ending population growth can housing affordability begin to improve.

SPA commends the Lord Mayor's recent comments regarding the unsustainable level of immigration into the country. SPA recommends the BCC resist population pressures on the city by refusing changes that lower average standards of living in order to increase the city's capacity to accommodate more people. Don't build and they won't come.

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