

Friday, 18 November 2011

CITY OF RYDE CALLS FOR TIGHTER REGULATIONS ON STUDENT ACCOMMODATION

The City of Ryde has called on the NSW Government to tighten regulations to protect students from possible exploitation by unreasonable landlords.

In a submission to the NSW Parliamentary Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in New South Wales, Council has recommended:

- A statewide registration system for legal boarding houses at no cost to local government
- New laws to protect vulnerable students from unreasonable landlords (similar to protection provided under the Residential Tenancy Act)
- Changes to laws to enable Council staff faster and easier means to access properties suspected of exploiting students or operating illegal boarding houses; and
- Opportunity to work with the Department of Planning on planning controls and legislation for affordable accommodation.

“I am pleased that the City of Ryde has been given the opportunity to put our views to Parliament on this important issue for metropolitan Sydney,” said Mayor Artin Etmekdjian.

“We have been working for several years to address the issue of unauthorised boarding houses throughout our LGA. A number of student accommodation issues have emerged during these investigations.

“These two issues – unauthorised boarding houses and student accommodation - are strongly linked and must be addressed together as part of a holistic approach.

“Council has already taken several steps to address student accommodation concerns in our area, including working closely with Macquarie University, the biggest local tertiary education provider.

“Building on our already strong relationship with Macquarie University is central to Council’s approach in tackling this issue.”

Clr Etmekdjian said other work undertaken by Council included commissioning research into accommodation supply issues and unauthorised boarding houses with a particular focus on investigation and enforcement.

“Discussions with key stakeholders – residents, landlords, students, tertiary education providers and property developers – have given us valuable insight into all perspectives,” he said.

“Council staff are currently working on a boarding house policy which will include an enforcement policy as well as planning controls specific to boarding houses.” The Inquiry into International Student Accommodation in New South Wales is conducted by the Legislative Assembly’s Social Policy Committee and is due to issue its final report on 25 November 2011.

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