

MAKING GREAT PLACES: DENSITY DONE WELL.... AND NOT SO WELL

Overview

- What is “density”?
- Why is Government pushing for more of it?
- How do you stop bad development.
- What are the ingredients of “Density done Well”?
- What are some of the things we should be fighting for in this process?

Density Done Well

- What is density?
- Is Sydney already a dense city?
- Is Redfern/Waterloo already very “dense”?

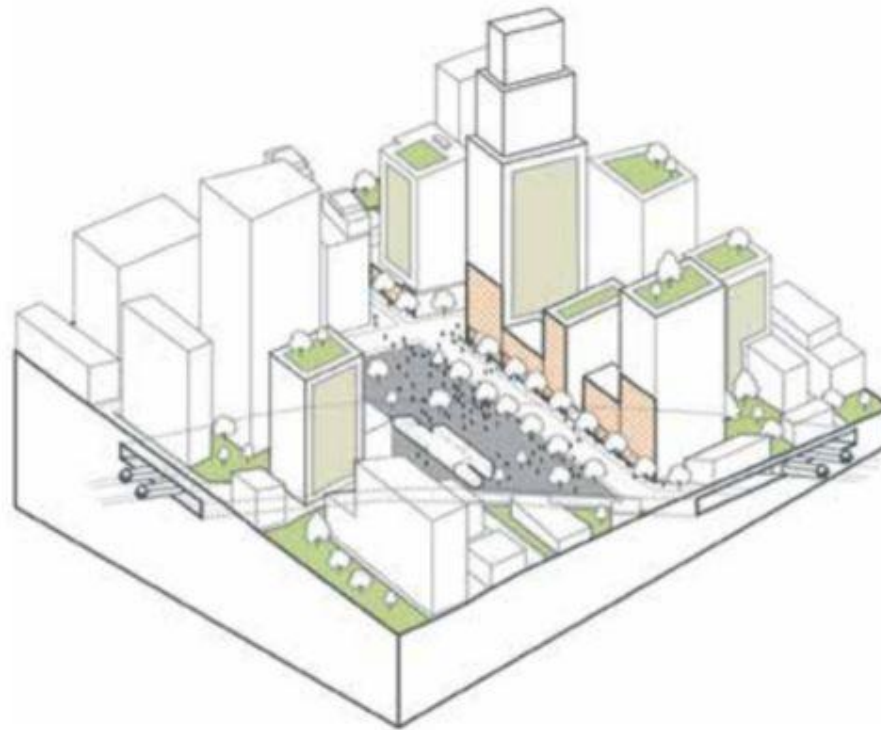
Benefits of density

- Sydney's population is going to double in the next 40 years.
- There is a consensus among architects, urban designers and planners that sprawl has negative impacts on how a city functions and also on the health of its residents

Why is Government pushing density?

- Sydney sits at a crossroads
 - It took two centuries to build all the trains, houses, harbour bridges and skyscrapers we have now
 - We have only forty years to build the equivalent again
- Until recently, we've been able to accommodate population growth by simply adding new suburbs next to existing urban areas
 - The result is a very low density city, with a sprawling, car-dependent, population

Amenity increases as density increases



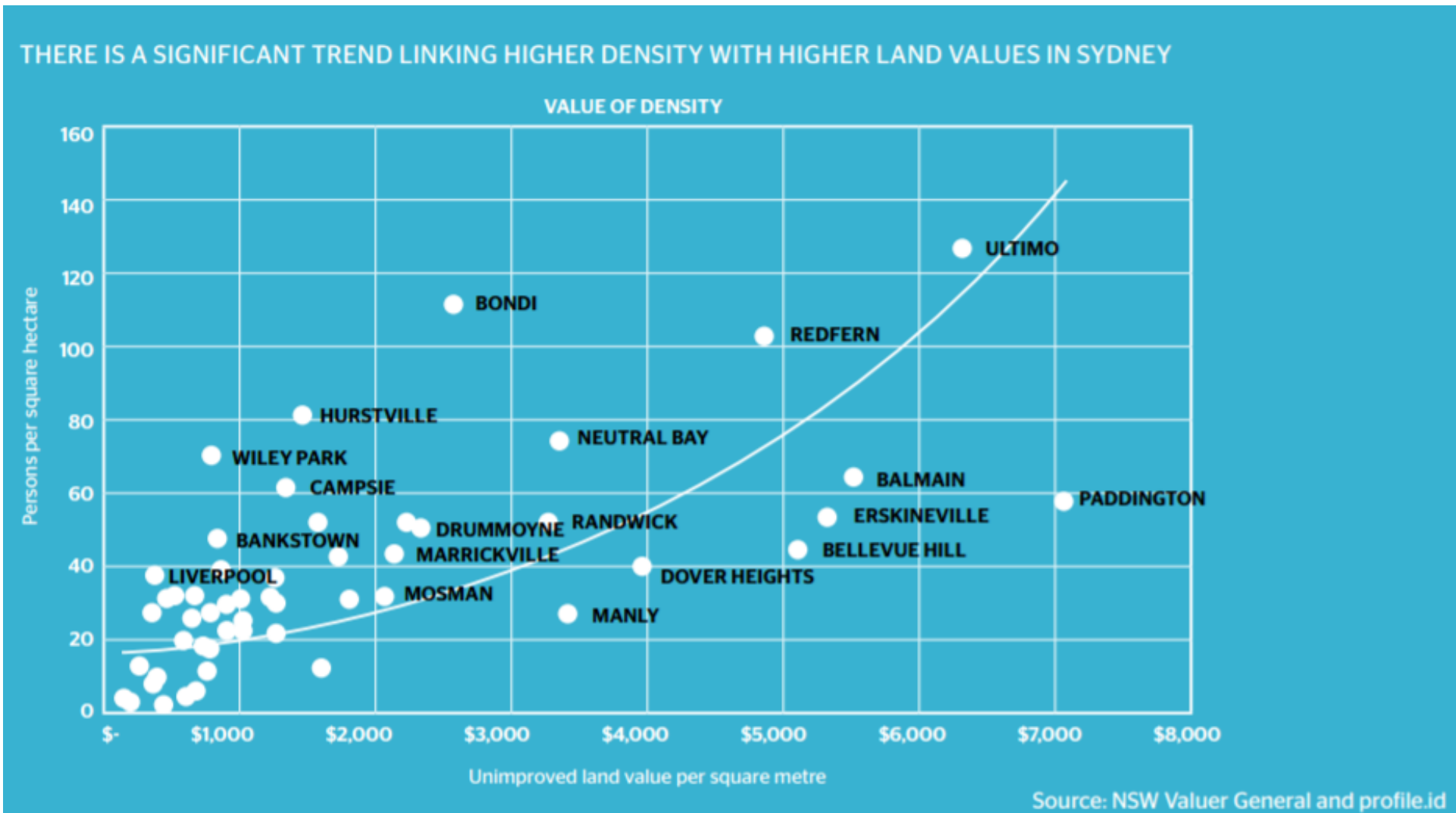
HIGH DENSITY

- **Education:** Multiple schools and higher education within the local area
- **Health:** Specialist medical care locally accessible
- **Transport:** Integrated public transport with high cycling and walking use
- **Open space:** Communal, hard and soft with high quality amenities
- **Employment:** Business hub with global reach and supporting services

What the experts say?

- Health experts tell us that areas with higher density hold healthier and more active populations.
- Transport planners tell us that only high density neighbourhoods can support public transport and travel options like cycling and walking
- Environmentalists will tell you that higher density neighbourhoods use less energy
- Economists tell us that high density neighbourhoods are more productive, creative, and efficient.
- Most importantly, behavioural psychologists tell us that we instinctively like dense, 'people' places. That we are essentially social animals and we crave places with lots of other people.

But dense places are expensive places to live



But if it's so good why is it so strongly opposed?

- Because we rarely ever do it well.
- Densification usually means increased prices and less affordability.
- It is often just crowding people into high rise dormitory suburbs.
- So what can make density work for everyone?

Beauty is not in the eye of the beholder

- Don't believe the Government, the Council or the developer!
- They rarely know what's best or what will work for the community.
- There are some key ingredients to making a place better. Great places have certain things in common that make them great.
- I don't think the Government or the Developer are going to give it to our community. We should insist that do.

Commonality 1: Streets not roads, people not cars

- The best places feature streets scaled for people, with a high intersection density. We should insist on the Government reinstating the old grid pattern of Waterloo.

STREET MAPS AT THE SAME SCALE

Density of intersections improves the urban fabric of places we love to spend time in.



Venice, Italy
577 intersections/square km



Crows Nest, Sydney
144 intersections/square km



Winston Hills, Sydney
60 intersections/square km



Los Angeles, CA
58 intersections/square km

Waterloo in 1943



Commonality 2: Fine grain and mixed-use

- When we think of places that are interesting or beautiful there's another feature they all have in common: there's lots to see, lots to do and a lot going on.
- These places aren't just dense with housing or dense with office buildings, there is a mixture of both. There are also cafes and restaurants, businesses and workshops, as well as homes.
- Most of these places are what planners called "mixed use".
- I doubt the Government is planning for "mixed use".

Commonality 3: Order and variety

- Hard wired into our psychology is a desire for both order and variety, which may seem like a contradiction. But the great parts of Sydney, and cities around the world, get the balance right when it comes to these two human wants.
- Order is the reason locals and tourists love Paris and New York. However, excessive regularity can be soul destroying, relentless and harsh.
- Too often new development looks like Legoland.

Commonality 4: Connectivity and infrastructure

- Great cities and places are well connected and well serviced by infrastructure. In many cases it is this connectivity that makes them such wonderful places.
- Will we be able to get around?
- Will the buses be still available or will we be forced onto the new Metro?
- If I have a car, can I park it?

Commonality 5: Diversity of people and experiences

- The final commonality great cities and places have is that they are not monocultures.
 - They have lots of housing, but are not just dormitory suburbs where people sleep but don't work or play.
 - They are employment centres, but not just office parks, full of workers during the day and ghost towns at night.
 - They have lots of entertainment and things to do, not only when the game is on or the show is in town, but all the time and every day.
- Great cities and places somehow manage to achieve all three of these in one. You can work, rest and play.
- I don't think the 70/30 mix suggested by Government is right for Waterloo.

New vrs Old South Sydney

- How do we preserve the things we want to keep?
- How do we make sure we are fixing existing problems?
- How do we make sure we get our slice of the pie?
- The Redfern/Waterloo community benefit trust.