

# Hills Shire anti-development approach will reduce housing supply

Wednesday, 31 January 2018

The announcement that Mirvac is pulling out of a proposed housing development in the Hills Shire is a response to the anti-development approach taken by the council, says the Urban Taskforce.

"The Hills Shire Council seem to only want large houses and apartments rather than smaller, more affordable homes," says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "The continual push by the local council, supported by local Members of Parliament, to have reduced development and huge home sizes for the wealthy is sending a signal to the development industry that they are not wanted. Council's approach seems quite selfish considering the state government is spending billions of dollars in building a new metro rail line to connect The Hills district with the Sydney CBD."

"There is a growing anti-development sentiment occurring in metropolitan Sydney that seems to prefer no change to existing communities. If Sydney is going to grow from its current 5 million people to 8 million over the next 40 years then greater density of development around rail stations is essential. Clearly Sydney is evolving a new urban lifestyle around apartment living with the 2016 census showing that 30% of Sydney homes are now apartments. The swing to apartment living is partly a lifestyle issue and partly an affordability issue. All levels of government have a responsibility to support the ability of future generations to have somewhere to live that is affordable."

"Recent research for the Urban Taskforce by demographers McCrindle has demonstrated that apartment dwellers have different characteristics to house dwellers. They are younger, more educated, more culturally connected and more interested in lifestyle than the dollar value of a house. The survey also indicated that apartment dwellers are more likely to vote Labor than Liberal and this may be influencing attitudes of the Liberal controlled Hills Shire Council."

"The significance of a major developer like Mirvac pulling out of a large project at the Showground station precinct will send a message to councils trying to use the planning system for social engineering. Long term thinking is essential from urban councils to build new types of communities. Development of well-located sites presents opportunities for councils to work proactively with developers to deliver positive outcomes for the community and it is disappointing when they are instead driving developers away."

"To his credit Planning Minister, Anthony Roberts, has demonstrated long term thinking in his criticisms of the approach by the Hills Shire Council to be different to the rest of Sydney."

*The Urban Taskforce is a property development industry group, representing Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers.*

Media Enquires: Chris Johnson, Chief Executive Officer: 0412 258 283.

Follow us on:   