

Chatswood and Randwick Council Plans Will Slow Housing And Jobs

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The recently released plans by Randwick Council and Willoughby Council contain restrictions and levies that will slow development down says the Urban Taskforce.

"The *Draft Kingsford and Kensington Planning Strategy* has only slightly lifted building heights along Anzac Parade in response to the state government's substantial financial investment in the new light rail." Says Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson. "But property developers must pay a \$475 per square metre charge by council for the additional development area, as well as an affordable housing levy of up to 5%."

"These extra taxes, costs and levies will impact on the economic feasibility of development projects."

"With the significant investment of tax payer money by the state government in the light rail along Anzac Parade there should be a requirement on local government to significantly lift heights and densities along the rail line. The jump from 7 storeys to 9 is very minimal and is unlikely to be economically viable as fire safety requirements change substantially above 8 storeys making a building of this height more costly. The small zone for buildings up to 18 storeys should have been more extensive."

"The *Chatswood CBD Draft Planning & Urban Design Strategy* has made development more restrictive by reinforcing the commercial only zone in the centre of Chatswood. The last commercial building to be built in the Chatswood town centre was in 1991 which is 25 years ago."

"Clearly there is a very limited market for commercial development in the Chatswood town centre. A better approach would be to require the lower floors of new development to incorporate commercial space and have residential apartments above this."

"A recent approval by the Department of Planning for a project in the Commercial Core of Parramatta was for a 43 storey residential tower with commercial uses on the street front and lower floors. This flexible approach is much more realistic and mindful of the limitations of the property market, than the inflexible, restrictive zoning approach being adopted by councils."

“The Urban Taskforce is concerned that councils seem to be interpreting draft state government planning documents like the District Plans and then changing their local planning documents. The swing to commercial only cores is an example of this as is the number of councils proposing Affordable Housing levies. The Inner West Council has lifted the state government’s proposed 5% to 10% affordable housing levy up to 15%. The state government must keep a lid on the aspirational demands of local councils to apply multiple taxes on developers or new housing projects will not be economically feasible.”

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

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