

Political leaders must learn from quality urban renewal projects

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Despite a pre-election anti-development environment in Sydney there are many quality examples of urban renewal within Sydney as well as Singapore, London and New York. Local politicians should learn from these projects, says the Urban Taskforce.

"The Creating Communities Conference attended by over 300 people last Friday demonstrated many examples of how to create quality development that give a positive rebuttal to the anti-development rhetoric that is occurring in the lead up to next year's NSW election," says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "It was very timely to see so many excellent urban developments from around the world to remind us in Sydney that growth and new developments can add excitement and positive new places for communities to live, work and relax."

Gordon Adams, the Head of Planning at the Battersea Power Station Development Company, explained the importance of political leadership to drive this massive urban renewal project in London. The project's size was large enough to get the London Underground's Northern Line extended to the site and this has generated a ripple effect of urban renewal in the surrounding areas. Ultimately Battersea will have 3,500 apartments, 15,000 jobs including the biggest Apple office in the UK, parks, child care, restaurants and community facilities. The combination on metro rail, a centre for jobs and a large number of new homes has created a new city within a city.

Marianne Kwok, Design Director, Kohn Pedersen Fox in New York was the key master planner for that city's major urban renewal project at Hudson Yards over underused railway yards. A new station was added to the New York subway and the famous elevated pedestrian network of the High Line weaves through the site and the buildings. Hudson Yards will have 4,000 new homes, 1 million square feet of office space, three new parks, child care, shops and restaurants and some amazing public art works.

Rahul Mittal, Director Design, Cistri Singapore gave a detailed overview of how similar Singapore was to Sydney in population terms but that Singapore was much denser but still very liveable. He positioned Singapore as an example of how the balancing of new development with an extensive metro rail network and a strong greening policy can lead to positive results.

The mood at the Creating Communities Conference was very upbeat about how quality new development can add value to the residents and workers in new precincts and how a level of excitement can occur with new stimulating developments. A number of emerging Sydney urban renewal projects were presented that matched the quality of the international examples.

Dominic Sullivan outlined the rationale behind PAYCE's Melrose Park proposed development, Neil Arckless from Lendlease presented the mixed use precinct of Darling Square. Sasha Kovic and Scott Clohessy from Frasers Property outlined the concept behind the Ivanhoe project that will house social, affordable and market housing as well as a new school and parklands.

The greenfield housing development at Willowdale was presented by Stockland's Sophie Pickett-Heaps along with Stockland's focus on building communities. Toga's Fabrizio Perilli gave an excellent outline of his Surry Hills Village project that carried the laneway culture of the suburb into this new development.

With a multitude of quality urban renewal projects presented from different world cities and from different parts of Sydney there is no doubt that the development industry is making a very positive contribution to the future of urban living. The current negative debate about over development in Sydney needs to be balanced by the very positive examples of how other cities have passed through this growth phase and by the emerging examples of quality development across Sydney.

The Urban Taskforce calls on all politicians in the lead up to the NSW election next March to take a positive approach to quality new development rather than encouraging the fear of change in their electorates that will create an ant-development attitude to garner short term votes. Sydney needs politicians that are committed to the long term future of Sydney for future generations.



Battersea Power Station, London



Hudson Yards, New York

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

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