

Consistency needed on the location of new housing in Sydney for communities and industry

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The announcement by the NSW Opposition that they will change the current distribution of new housing across metropolitan Sydney will lead to uncertainty for the development industry and for communities says the Urban Taskforce.

"Every four years or so the NSW Government or an incoming government rethinks new housing targets for council areas across greater Sydney." Says Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson "These continually shifting targets make it impossible for the private sector to know where they should buy land for new housing."

"We have had too many flip flops on where housing should go in Sydney since the 2014 metro strategy which has caused the community, developers and even government agencies so much confusion that we now have gridlock and a massive drop in apartment approvals of 38 percent over the last year."

"Sydney's previous metropolitan strategy, released in 2014, 'A Plan for Growing Sydney' set a target of 664,000 new homes over 20 years and defined key areas where the homes would go including Urban Renewal Corridors. The Greater Sydney Commission then changed a number of policies when it issued a new metropolitan plan for Sydney in October 2017. New homes were increased to 725,000 over 20 years, new housing was deleted from strategic centres and a new approach for Priority Precincts was instigated. District Plans then identified 5 year new housing targets to individual council areas. In 2017 the NSW Government announced a large number of Priority Precincts but some months later these became Planned Precincts. As the 2019 state election got closer the NSW government has completely backed down on a number of Planned Precincts, on the 'Missing Middle' code for townhouses and suspended planning proposals in Ryde at the behest of the Local Member of Parliament."

"These continual changes are now compounded by the state opposition saying they will instruct the Greater Sydney Commission to revise housing supply targets across the city. Home builders who have been encouraged to buy land for new housing in Priority or Planned Precincts may now find the land is dramatically reduced in value and they are no longer permitted to redevelopment their land for housing."

“The whole point of having the Greater Sydney Commission as an independent body to plan for Sydney’s future growth must now be questioned. The state opposition does have a case to say that new housing has not been fairly distributed across Greater Sydney. The Urban Taskforce issued a Media Release on this issue on November 15, 2018 indicating that the top 10 councils had completed more than 2,000 homes over the last year while the bottom 10 only averaged around 200 homes a year.”

“The Urban Taskforce believes some parts of Sydney should take more development but that the principle of locating new apartment buildings around railway stations should be followed evenly across the existing and proposed rail network. More importantly whoever is in government after March 23 must quickly resolve where new homes should be built as the supply of new homes is falling fast with apartment approvals dropping by 38 percent over the last year. To put Sydney’s planning on hold for a year will be disastrous for the supply of new homes and for the jobs that the industry generates.”

*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.

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