

Spot rezonings need to be Independently assessed

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The NSW Labor Party announcement that they will eliminate spot rezoning if elected in March is a misunderstanding of the planning system says the Urban Taskforce.

"Spot rezoning was introduced because many councils were very slow to update their Local Environmental Plans yet population growth had increased or new infrastructure like metro rail was being built." Says Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson "Many councils were against new child care centres that competed against their own centres or did not support affordable housing in their area. In these circumstances where councils were stopping social responsible development or where their planning documents were out of date it is necessary to have a review system that has independent assessment."

"The Plan for Sydney, A Metropolis of Three Cities, by the Greater Sydney Commission is only a year old and it sets the big picture agenda for where growth should occur. Unfortunately most councils have LEPs that are sometimes decades old. It is essential that planning responds to today's needs not the past. "

"Giving councils too much power in the rezoning process creates an environment conducive to corruption. The current District Planning Panels are independent and were set up to keep potentially corrupt councillors out of the process."

"Former Governor of the Reserve Bank of Australia, Glenn Stevens, in a report to the NSW Government raised concern that the planning system was too slow and out of date with current economic circumstances. The spot rezoning approach allows independent assessment of planning proposals that fit the Greater Sydney Commissions most recent plans but don't conform to out of date council plans. As Glenn Stevens highlighted to wait for 5 years for the council plans to catch up is a very inefficient way to keep the economy of housing supply being relevant."

"The Labor statement that spot rezoning is about developer deals is totally wrong. It is about being current with planning rather than being out of date. It is also about ensuring that anti -development councils cannot undermine the metropolitan wide approach taken by the Greater Sydney Commission."

"Importantly Pre-Gateway reviews of Planning Proposals are undertaken by appointed experts on District Planning Panels that include a local council representative. The checks and balances are there to ensure probity and independent decision making."

"It is of concern that the Labor Party is attacking developers for trying to follow the independent GSC plans when local councils are out of date with their own plans."

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

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