

# MISSING MIDDLE DELAY ALLOWS COUNCILS TO DEFINE APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS FOR TOWNHOUSES

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The report to the NSW Government by Roberta Ryan has recommended delaying for another year the implementation of the Missing Middle code, says the Urban Taskforce.

"The implementation of the Missing Middle town house code in NSW has been poorly communicated to the Sydney community," says Urban Taskforce CEO Chris Johnson. "It will be some years since the initial announcement by the NSW Government that a new complying code for town houses and terrace houses will increase density without the need for taller towers. But the community and council reaction was that the code could destroy the character of the existing low rise suburbs."

"Rather than getting behind the code and explaining its benefits the government, with an election coming, decided to delay the code for a year because of the community concerns. The Ryan report now extends the delay to 1 July 2020 to give councils time to work out where terrace houses should be located. Lane Cove council has now banned the code from R2 zones which covers detached house areas only allowing the denser form of development in certain areas."

"In a strange twist, the recent Local Strategic Planning Statement for Canada Bay has zoned areas 400 metres from two railway stations for the Missing Middle rather than taller apartment buildings. It seems that Canada Bay now sees townhouses as the NSW Government's preferred approach to density around railway stations."

"The Roberta Ryan report also suggested the Low Rise Medium Density housing Code should be re-named the Two Storey Housing Diversity Code to better communicate the intent of the code to communities and states that there should be no LGA wide permanent exclusions from the Code, and councils should be prevented from nominating an entire LGA or all R2 Low Density Residential areas as 'Special Local Character Areas' to prevent the application of the Code.

"The report also seeks to prohibit more councils from introducing changes to their LEPs or DCPs to prevent the application of the Code however this is too little too late as most councils throughout Sydney have already introduced these changes and vast areas of the Sydney Metropolitan area will be largely excluded from the code when or if it actually commences in July 2020."

"The Urban Taskforce believes the NSW Government mis-read the communities concern about density by proposing denser two storey buildings across low rise suburbs as an alternative to taller apartment buildings around railway stations. We are concerned that the government's February

2019 guide on the importance of local neighbourhood character (Local Character and Place Guide line) also ignores taller apartment buildings and focuses on terrace houses and only includes buildings up to 3 floors high."

"The missing middle has a limited role in new housing supply in discrete areas defined by councils and in greenfield areas where existing low rise housing does not exist. The government must support a diverse range of housing types with many councils in their Local Strategic Planning Statements indicating that up to 80 percent of new homes by 2036 will be apartments."

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

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