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Urban Taskforce welcomes NSW Government move to progress the redevelopment of the Pyrmont Peninsula – but now is the time for more!

The Urban Taskforce Chief Executive, Tom Forrest, today welcomed the announcement by the NSW Minister for Planning, Hon Rob Stokes, of plans to progress the renewal and redevelopment of the Pyrmont Peninsula.

This is a welcome move forward after a poison combination of politics and bureaucratic in-fighting stymied development of this critical location last year with the IPC determining that the Star Casio / Ritz Carlton Hotel development was not supported by Strategic plans for the precinct late last year.

“It is fantastic to see that the NSW Government has acknowledged the critical role that Pyrmont plays in the future of Sydney as a global city,” said Urban Taskforce CEO, Tom Forrest.

“The release of ‘*Directions for the Pyrmont Peninsula Place Strategy*’ by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment is a good start as it promotes the renewal and redevelopment of Pyrmont and its surrounds. The new “strategy” establishes the strategic framework for high rise development in Pyrmont and the logical extension of the CBD along the Pyrmont peninsula.

This change has come about following a comprehensive review of the Independent Planning Commission, the public intervention by the Treasurer and a review of the precinct by the GSC. The Department of Planning’s submission on the Star proposal as sent to the Independent Planning Commission last year was anti-jobs and anti-growth. This is exactly the opposite to what is needed given the recession we now face.

“I am pleased to see that the Minister for Planning has taken hold of this matter and established a plan for the development of this important precinct”, Mr Forrest said.

Mr Forrest said that a change of mind-set is needed across the planning system.

“All those involved in the planning system need to stop and re-set. We must continue to deliver improved amenity for residents, improved environmental outcomes and improved architectural built form. But the interests of local NIMBY groups must now to be considered against the greater need for economic growth, increased housing supply, jobs and employment”, Mr Forrest said.

“Now is the time to shift the focus away from Strategic Planning and for Minister Stokes to use the powers he has as the Minister for Planning to drive through a COVID Recovery State Environmental Planning Policy (SEPP) which suspends the need to conform with Local Strategic Plans and facilitates approvals as a matter of priority. Jobs and investment are what is needed. This is in the hands of the NSW Government.

“The GSC, having completed its Strategic Planning mandate, should now focus all its efforts on supporting the Department in calling in projects and fast-tracking them for approvals.

“With all the legislative powers at his hands, Minister can make a new SEPP any time (based on a location, a precinct, power to suspend the need for concurrences or the need for lengthy exhibition processes. Minister, this is the time to use those powers”, Mr Forrest said.

While most Councils are flat-out setting up working from home arrangements and managing public health, rubbish collection and general order, this is the time for the NSW Government to step in and drive our economy forward so we are ready to go as soon as the current health crisis abates.

End.

8The Urban Taskforce is a property development industry group, representing Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers.

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