

MEDIA RELEASE

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Wagga Wagga celebrates growth while Sydney Councils are dominated by NIMBYs

Wagga Wagga's local media has recently celebrated home approvals in the area rising by more than 30 per cent putting Wagga Wagga on track to see about \$140 million worth of new houses built over the financial year.

ABS data reveals that detached homes in Wagga were approved at an average rate of 33 new dwellings per month between July 2020 and February 2021. The previous financial year saw just 24 new homes approved each month.

Local builders are saying they have "never been so busy".

So busy in fact that the industry is being challenged by a skilled labour and building materials shortage. Urban Taskforce members working in the area are reporting that it's near impossible to get roofers on site and they are experiencing "chronic" delays in accessing timber and steel framing.

The challenge for Wagga Wagga and other regional councils, experiencing growth to their communities and economies, is ensuring they work with State Government (and quickly) to ensure that land for new residential land is rezoned at a rate that meets this growing demand.

COVID-19 has seen an exodus from Sydney with people flocking to the safety of living in regional communities without the congestion and pollution of city living.

This new demand for new homes is great for the regions, great for the property development and construction industry and great for the growth of these local economies and beyond.

The enthusiasm for growth in our regional cities contrasts with the NIMBY attitude in Sydney – which has restricted housing supply and pushed prices up to record levels. City dwellers, especially young people, are increasingly being driven out of Greater Sydney by rising house prices.

The regions have the space to grow out. Sydney does not. The regions celebrate the investment in their community and the opportunities that come with the inevitable change to the character of their areas. Sydney does not.

Sydney's geographical and topographical constraints set the limits of where it can expand out. The recent floods have resulted in the pause button being pushed on some precincts identified for new housing in Western Sydney.

Fresh supply of new homes is urgently needed to push housing prices down and accommodate our growing population. If Sydney won't take the growth, the regional communities of NSW are showing that they are up for it – but the Government needs to ensure that supply lines are open so the regional construction sector is able to deliver.

End.

The comments above can be attributed to Tom Forrest, CEO, Urban Taskforce

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

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