



Urban Living Network covers news about new homes and apartment developments, retail trends, job locations, density related to railway stations, urban projects on city fringes, strata and planning reforms. We aim to provide real data on trends, housing supply and demographic change. ULN is essential reading for all those involved in urban living including politicians, councils, planners, architects, developers, financiers, legal firms, real estate agents and strata bodies.

**Tom Forrest**  
**CEO - Urban Taskforce Australia**

1 December 2023

## In this Edition...

1. Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill passes the NSW Parliament – victory for commonsense
2. Sydney City looks to go big on housing
3. Government changes to R2 and R3 permissible building types to fix Sydney's 'missing middle'
4. ABS housing approvals data – more action on planning reform needed - urgently!
5. Department of Planning's own housing supply dashboards shows housing supply way off the mark

6. NSW Liberal Party conference endorses pro housing policy ... it lasted 48 hours
  7. Housing and rents still stoking inflation
  8. The politics of planning – no part of Sydney should be exempt from carrying its fair share
  9. Premier backs modular homes - now scrap the Planning ban in Sydney
  10. Heritage Council's warped priorities amidst a housing supply crisis
  11. Seniors suffering under housing stress
  12. Public Service Super fund investing billions in UK infrastructure and housing – go figure
  13. Is the YIMBY movement “left” or “right”?
  14. Parliamentary Inquiry into Sydney Metro West – where's the business case?
  15. Other News
  16. Council Watch
  17. UTA in the news
  18. Members in the news
- 

## **1. Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill passes the NSW Parliament – victory for commonsense**

The Greater Cities Commission is no more with the Greater Cities Commission Act Repeal Bill 2023 passing both Houses of NSW Parliament.

The repeal removes another vestige of the former Government's mismanagement of planning and housing supply. It streamlines strategic planning in NSW and establishes a single line of responsibility and accountability through the Department of Planning for housing supply.

What is needed now is a set of housing completion housing supply targets than will deliver on the National Housing Accord and be enforced.

Back in May, Urban Taskforce released an *Urban Ideas* publication on the failure of Sydney's Regional Plan, authored by two eminent academics, Leslie Stein and Evan Jones.

The GSC (and then the GCC) turned into a bureaucratic pro-NIMBY behemoth, and was further undermined as it evolved into a political tool of the former Government, at the expense of housing supply or offending any Council or community group:

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***“... The empirically driven independent assessment of planning targets was quickly swept aside and replaced with a mandate to simply reflect what the Councils already had planned, Targets were way too low and as a result, there was very little pushback. But this ultimately led to a slowdown in assessments and a drop off in approvals...”***

**CEO Tom Forrest, Introduction, The Failure of Sydney’s Regional Plan, May 2023**

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The Repeal of the Act simply removed the administration that surrounded the GCC.

It removed the need to appoint a Chief Commissioner; it removes the need to appoint Commissioners to represent (even though they are unelected) each of the 6 cities. It removes the obligation on Government to appoint an Economic Commissioner, an Environment Commissioner, a Social Commissioner. None of these commissioners had any public accountability. The Secretary of Premier and Cabinet, of Treasury, and of Planning and Environment were also part of the GCC, but by the end, under the former Government, they simply stopped turning up.

Repealing the GCC Act was a common-sense fait accompli for all once the decision was made in June this year to wrap the GCC back under the Department of Planning. Well we thought so – but the Liberal and National Party decided to back the Greens and oppose the loomed Bill.

The ghost of former Minister Rob Stokes was clearly present and large in the Chamber. In fact the Member for Manly, James Griffin, said as much.

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***“... I contribute to debate on the Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023. I acknowledge the Minister, who is in the Chamber. I can feel the ghost of my dear friend the former Minister, Rob Stokes, lurking around...”***

**James Griffin MP, NSW Legislative Assembly Hansard, November 28**

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**Rob Stokes haunts Member for Manly James Griffin**

The Coalition backed Green amendments designed to slow down the setting of housing targets and add power to NIMBY councils opposed to housing supply. Even Chris Rath MLC, an outspoken public voice for YIMBYs and common sense, voted against the repeal of the GCC Act.

Though in Chris' defence, he is the Opposition Whip in the Legislative Council so he is effectively duty bound to vote for whatever Mark Speakman (he is the Opposition Leader) decides, lest he resign as Whip and lose the associated trappings.

The successful repeal of the GCC Act shows that legislative change is possible. It shows that even without the Liberal Party, the Government can progress sensible changes to drive housing supply. In itself, the passing of the GCC Repeal Bill is no big deal. But its passage through the Parliament is a great sign for housing supply in NSW.

For a rare glimpse into the quality of debate among our elected leaders in the Legislative Council , click the link below:

[Greater Cities Commission Repeal Bill 2023](#)



## 2. Sydney City looks to go big on housing



### **More housing proposed for Sydney CBD, Pyrmont and Ultimo**

Our colleagues at Urbis have prepared an initial cut of proposed changes contemplated by City of Sydney which will boost the supply of BTR apartments in the CBD, increase density in Pyrmont and Ultimo and encourage more family sized apartments.

Urban Taskforce has been arguing for more residential development in the Sydney CBD for years now. Subject to detailed review, today's announcement by the Lord Mayor is very welcome.

The City of Sydney has prepared a suite of proposed changes to the planning controls applying to Central Sydney and the LGA which are being put to their Planning Committee next Monday.

To view the agenda, click the link below:

[City Of Sydney - Transport, Heritage and Planning Committee](#)

The proposed amendments are expected to be adopted by Council early next week and then submitted to DPE for Gateway approval. Public exhibition will occur in Q1 2024.

The changes entail:

### **a. Pyrmont Place Peninsula**

Just over 3 years ago the Department of Planning & Environment released the Pyrmont Place Strategy, which included new planning controls for the first stage of the precinct including The Star, UTS Indigenous Residential College and the Sydney Metro Sites in Pyrmont. The remainder of the Peninsula has been the subject of a strategic review by the City of Sydney Council, with the view to “promote employment growth, visitor accommodation, affordable enterprise space, high tech industry, retail, community and cultural uses”.

The City of Sydney are reporting new planning controls and series of amendments to Council next week, which will include changes to a number of ‘key sites’, to unlock additional strategic floorspace in the area. The intent is that a Gateway Determination and public exhibition will occur early next year to hear from stakeholders and the industry, with the City targeting Finalisation of the LEP in July 2024. The key take aways are:

1. An additional 4,100 dwellings and up to 27,000 new jobs
2. 59 sites identified for change as part of the Planning Proposal (either height and/or floor space uplift)
3. Changes to the development contribution scheme for Pyrmont/Ultimo which will enable the City to impose a levy of up to 3% on new development (similar to Central Sydney) for development above a CIV of \$1 million
4. Affordable housing contribution of 9% to any residential floor space that exceeds the maximum FSR that applied prior to the proposed changes.

### **b. BTR (and Co-Living) is back in the City!**

After removing residential floor space incentives over the last 2 years, Council is proposing to re-introduce accommodation floor space for BTR in Central Sydney and for Co-Living in Area 4 of Central Sydney. This will make floor space outcomes generally consistent with other uses like commercial and hotels, with varying floor space ratios depending on the Area 1. These provisions will not however apply to Tower Cluster sites.

This is said to be a direct response to the housing rental supply crisis, where rental vacancies are at record lows. But be aware that this provision is proposed to be only temporary for 5 years.

### **c. Streamlining Design Competition Rules**

Some positive changes to ease process delays including:

1. Increasing the threshold for a design competition for buildings over 25 metres to now 35 metres

2. Offering incentives of both 10% height and 10% floors space (whereas previously you could only elect one)
3. Allowing a design review process for full affordable housing projects in lieu of a competition.

These are a proactive attempt by the City of Sydney to avoid the consequences of the announcement in Chris Minns' Bradfield oration where he announced that no design competition would be needed for any high rise building provided the applicant used one of 50 architects endorsed by the NSW government architect.

#### **d. Greater flexibility on the requirement for a Development Plan/Stage 1 DA**

Proposed provisions to allow Council to waive the need for a development plan/Stage 1 DA where this would be unreasonable or unnecessary in the circumstances. This is aimed at cutting unnecessary planning processes that delay projects but add little value to the outcome. This could be a positive change but it should be noted that discretion remains with Council.

#### **e. Additional uses that qualify for Accommodation Floor Space**

Long overdue, but this is an important change - to increase the range of uses (beyond typical retail/commercial uses) that can qualify for accommodation floor space, such as place of worship, registered clubs etc, which will assist mixed use projects in Central Sydney.

#### **f. Incentive Provisions for Green Roofs**

Allowing some flexibility of building height controls to accommodate green roofs and ancillary structures as part of communal open space. This doesn't include increased GFA.

#### **g. New Rules on Dwelling Retention**

On the negative side and a significant intervention in the market (in terms of apartment mix) are proposed new rules to prevent the loss of dwellings in an apartment refurbishment or redevelopment. This proposed LEP provision would prevent such development reducing the existing number of apartments by more than one dwelling or 15% of dwellings, whichever is the greater. This provision targets buildings which from a market perspective are being converted from smaller units into larger apartments.

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### **3. Government changes to R2 and R3 permissible building types to fix Sydney's 'missing middle'**

## Diverse and well-located homes



Source: DPE

Urban Taskforce welcomes the announcement by the Minister for Planning, Paul Scully, that a new State Environmental Planning Policy will be introduced to override restrictive local controls which were preventing housing supply in R2 (low density residential) and R3 (medium density residential).

It is pleasing to see the Minns Government prepared to push through local government sensibilities and allow for more housing choice and supply where people want to live and work.

The former Government had caved into NIMBY councils and allowed them to switch off housing supply in many of these zones.

As a result – more than 60% of all R3 zones in the Sydney basin prohibited residential flat buildings, and only 2 out of three LEP's permitted terrace or 1-2 story buildings in R2 zoning.

It was clear the status quo wasn't delivering the housing needed – and the Government is to be congratulated for announcing these necessary reforms.

In terms of R2 – low rise residential zoning- the following will be allowable within 800m of any transport node or town centre:

- Dual Occupancy
- Two story apartment buildings (or more if current height limits permit)
- Manor homes / Terraces

Within R3 - midrise residential zones

- 6 storey residential flat buildings will be permissible within 400m of a transport node or town centre
- 4 storey residential flat buildings will be permissible between 400m and 800m of a transport node or train station.

DPE has advised that it will also work with Councils to increase height limits beyond these controls where possible.



The draft changes will go on exhibition shortly and comments received up until mid-February 2024. The SEPP will apply from a date to be announced after that.

CEO Tom Forrest was interviewed on ABC Sydney radio regarding the reforms:

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***“... What these changes will do is allow for housing types in low and medium density residential zoning that had previously been prohibited by a change made in 2018...”***

**CEO Tom Forrest, ABC 702**

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The Berejiklian Government gave councils an “out” when it came to permitting residential flat buildings, manor houses and the like – most Councils took up the option. This had a big impact on housing supply.

The Minns Government reforms send yet another strong message to Sydney councils – change your approach or we’ll change it for you.

The SEPP will establish non-refusal standards which deal with height, FSR and minimum lot size, which will override provisions in the LEP and cannot be refused by a Council. Councils will still have a say when it comes to matters such as bushfire and flood risk as well as heritage.

This is where the challenge lies. Local heritage is important. But what has been witnessed over the past decade or so is certain councils using local heritage listings as a means of thwarting housing supply.

The Minister needs to ensure that heritage legislation is not abused through its use to undermine the Government’s sensible reforms. The Minister for Planning Paul Scully has sent a clear message to Councils that the misuse of heritage will not be tolerated:

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***“... My expectation is that it won’t be OK for people to manipulate the heritage system to artificially reduce their contribution to our shared housing responsibility... If this requires an update to the ministerial directive to be absolutely clear, I’ll work with the Minister for Heritage to make suitable updates...”***

**Minister Paul Scully MP, SMH, November 30**

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To read the SMH account of the Government sending a strong message that it will not tolerate the misuse of heritage legislation, click the link below:

\*Please note this article may be paywall protected.

[Sydney housing crisis: Sydney's heritage conservation areas will be exempt from Labor's development targets \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/sydney-housing-crisis-sydney-s-heritage-conservation-areas-will-be-exempt-from-labor-s-development-targets-2023-09-14)

In the context of a housing supply crisis and a 5-year National Housing Accord commencing in little over six months, time is a critical factor. The earlier this SEPP is in place, the better NSW's chances of meeting its housing targets.

To read more on the Government's proposal, click the link below:

[Diverse and well-located homes | Planning \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/diverse-and-well-located-homes-planning)

To read the media release from the Minister for Planning, Paul Scully, click the link below:

[Media Release - New planning rules to fast track low and mid rise housing](#)

To read the release from Urban Taskforce:

[Media Release - Minns Government to redress systemic failures in Sydney's 'missing middle'](#)

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## 4. ABS housing approvals data – more action on planning reform needed - urgently!

This week's housing approval figures from the ABS show a languishing NSW planning system which has turned out the worst annualised figures in terms of approvals in the last **10 years**.

A mere 46,667 dwelling approvals were issued in NSW in the 12 months to September 2023.



*Housing approvals have gone down a long way*

<b>NSW new dwelling Approvals data - Released by ABS 30/11/2023</b>	<b>Apartments (multi unit dwellings)</b>	<b>Approvals Stand alone homes</b>	<b>Total Seasonally Adjusted</b>
12 months till end Oct 2023	<b>WORST EVER</b> 23,612	<b>WORST EVER</b> 23,055	<b>WORST EVER</b> 46,667
12 months till end Oct 2022	25,612	27,828	53,440
12 months till end Oct 2021	32,763	31,130	63,893
12 months till end Oct 2020	24,135	25,188	49,323
12 months till end Oct 2019	25,809	26,339	52,148
12 months till end Oct 2018	38,263	30,749	69,012
12 months till end Oct 2017	42,304	29,508	71,812
12 months till end Oct 2016	47,259	29,768	77,027
12 months till end Oct 2015	41,876	27,304	69,180
12 months till end Oct 2014	29,934	24,725	54,659

Source: ABS, *Building Approvals*, 30 November 2023, Series 8731001

The month-on-month figures showed little sign of life with the NSW Planning system sleepwalking into the National Housing Accord:

<b>Last 13 months in NSW - month by month approvals data</b>			
	<b>Multi Unit Dwellings</b>	<b>Houses</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Oct-23</b>	<b>1,878</b>	<b>1,614</b>	<b>3,745</b>
Sep-23	1,450	1,919	3,369
Aug-23	1,862	1,901	3,763
Jul-23	1,533	1,830	3,363
Jun-23	1,603	1,862	3,465
May-23	4,716	1,837	6,553
Apr-23	2,214	1,902	4,116
Mar-23	1,620	1,868	3,488
Feb-23	1,304	1,944	3,248
Jan-23	813	1,803	2,616
Dec-22	3,277	2,118	5,395
Nov-22	1,321	2,225	4,483
Oct-22	1,851	2,220	4,071

Source: ABS, *Building Approvals*, 30 November 2023, Series 8731001

The ABS housing approvals data sends two strong signals.

First to the Minns Government to lock in to lock in the transit-oriented development (TOD) planning reforms, the infill affordable housing incentives policy reforms, as well as the low to mid rise housing reforms, and do it urgently.

And secondly to the Albanese Government to do much more to fund and support city making and housing enabling infrastructure. They can start by reversing their disastrous decision to cut funding from the M7/M12 interchange.

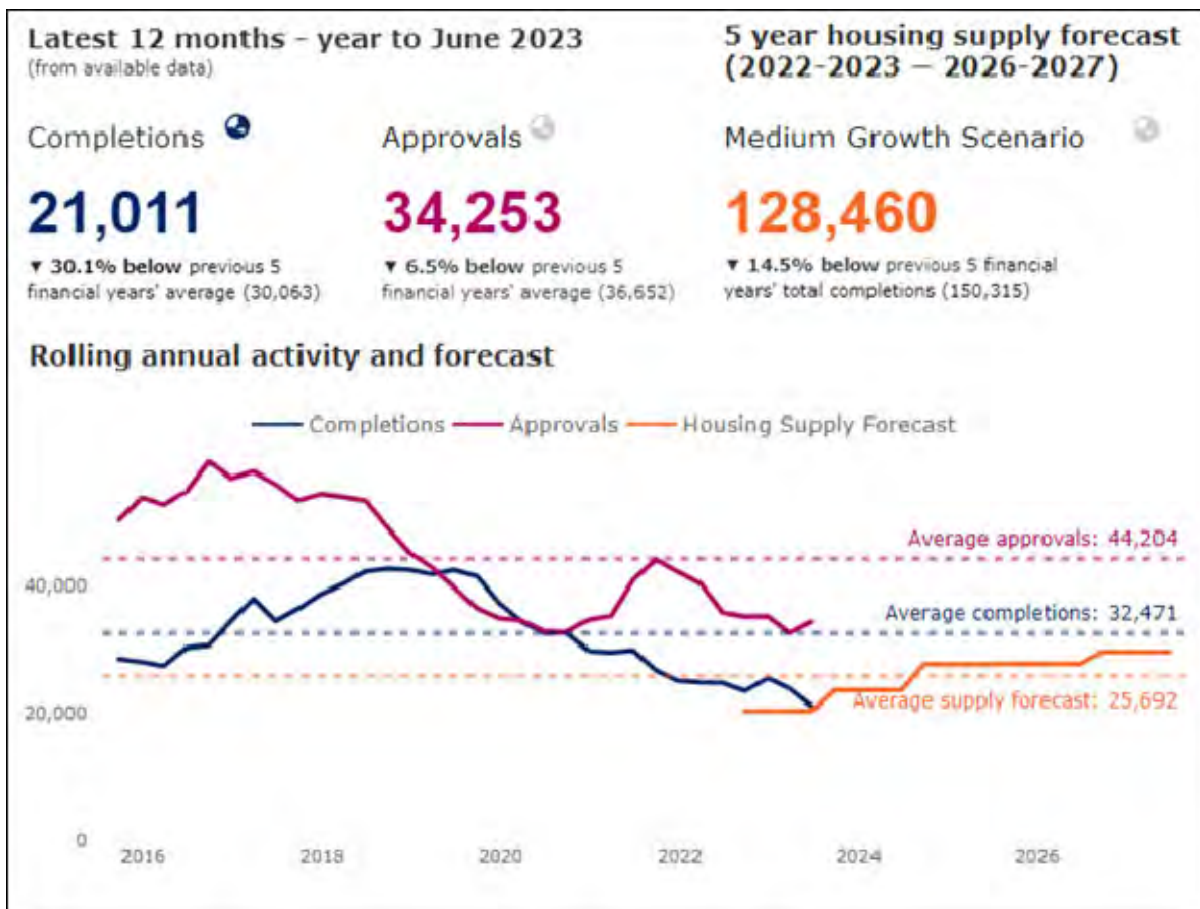
To read the Urban Taskforce release, click the link below:

[Media Release - Time for action on planning: 6 months before the start of the National Housing Accord NSW approvals are still going backwards](#)

## 5. Department of Planning's own housing supply dashboards shows housing supply way off the mark

The Greater Sydney Urban Development Dashboards were recently updated covering the performance over the 2022-23 financial year.

It shows what happens when the planning system stifles rather than stimulates housing supply.



Source: Greater Sydney UDP Dashboard



The dashboard shows completions headed downwards towards the 20,000 mark. Sydney will need to deliver a lion's share of the 376,000 new homes needed under the Accord - around 50,000 new homes each year for five years if NSW has any chance of meeting the National Housing Accord targets.

21,011 completions in 2022-23 is the second worst year since 2012-13. Yet since that time Sydney's population has swollen by about 800,000 people.

Even the Government's own data is clear – not enough is being done to solve the housing supply crisis.

### **A light on the Hill – the UDP Pilot in Western Sydney**

On the positive side, DPE has established a new Pilot Urban Development Program (UDP) for Western Sydney. They are working with developer representatives (including the Urban Taskforce), local councils and infrastructure agencies and are examining opportunities to co-ordinate and prioritise infrastructure to achieve maximum housing supply.

This is a strong sign that the drive for housing supply is reaching that the internal machinery of government decision making. This is very welcome.

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## **6. NSW Liberal Party conference endorses pro housing policy ... it lasted 48 hours**

A bold 10 point plan passed at the weekend's Liberal Party State conference.

The Liberal Party Conference motion called on the Parliamentary wing to develop a comprehensive policy to address the housing crisis, including one part to ***“rezone all lots within a 10 minute walking distance of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney as R3”***

Well, that motion lasted little more than 48 hours, as the NSW Opposition came out swinging against the Government's mid to low rise residential reforms - which were more conservative than that passed by the Liberal Party conference over the weekend.

Far from backing the Liberal Party Conference resolution, the Leader of the NSW Opposition, Mark Speakman MP and his Planning spokesman, Scott Farlow MLC certainly seem to be defending the status quo, responding to the Government's low-to mid rise plan with the not so cute line:



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*“...in the first instance the Government should give communities a chance to formulate local controls...”*

NSW Leader of the Opposition, Media Release November 28

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This is what happened under the former Government – it didn't work! We have a housing supply crisis.

It is a shame that key parts of the weekend motion only lasted 48 hours, for the 10 point plan, if it was ever implemented, would do much to reform the Planning system and boost housing supply and choice in Sydney. Perhaps there is a future for the Liberal Party in NSW, but Mark Speakman is leading his party in the opposite direction.

The following is a copy of the motion with some of the more interesting proposal highlighted:

That the 2023 State Convention of the Liberal Party of Australia, NSW Division RESOLVE, by ordinary motion, to:

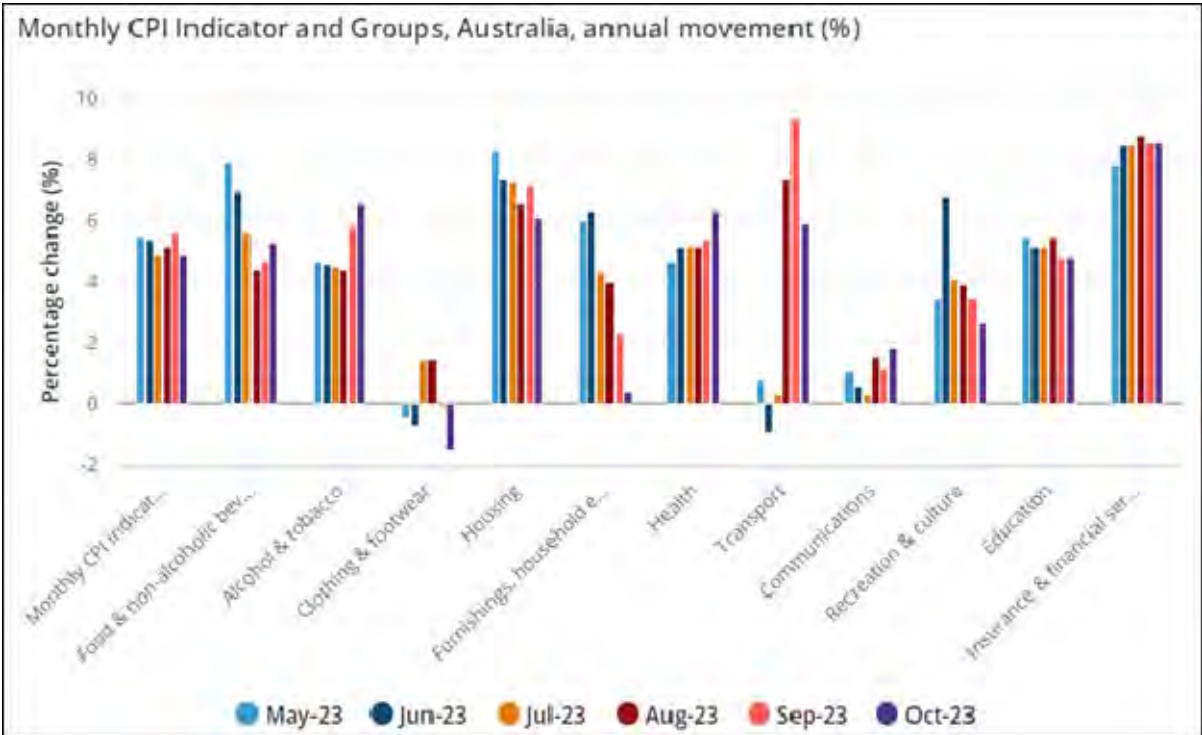
Call upon the State Parliamentary Party to develop a comprehensive housing policy to address the housing crisis, including but not limited to:

- a. Supporting the NSW Government's plan to privatise vacant Crown Land to enable housing development;
- b. Rewarding councils for meeting housing targets by providing a building bonus;
- c. Imposing a 'NIMBY penalty' on councils that fail to meet their housing targets by withholding infrastructure dollars;
- d. Rezoning all lots within a 5-minute walking radius of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney according to R4 High Density;
- e. Rezoning all lots within a 10-minute walking radius of existing train and metro stations in Greater Sydney according to R3 Medium Density;
- f. Rezoning lots within a 5-minute walking radius of a light rail stop within Greater Sydney and Newcastle to R3 Medium Density;
- g. Undertaking a council land audit whereby councils must submit a portfolio of all land holdings for a suitability assessment by the State Government and if not approved the State Government may commence steps towards acquiring the land;
- h. Undertaking steps towards abolishing Local Environmental Plans (LEP) and Development Control Plans (DCP) in favour of an integrated standardised planning solution where planning controls are linked to zoning;
- i. Moving Development Application (DA) approvals to a state level and imposing mandatory deadlines by which the DA must be resolved by; and
- j. Reforming the Heritage Act 1997 (NSW) to prevent arbitrary heritage protection orders being issued to prevent housing development.

NSW Liberal Party conference motion, Saturday, 25 November

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## 7. Housing and rents still stoking inflation



Source: ABS, Monthly CPI Indicator, Nov 29

The latest CPI data, whilst trending downwards, shows the lingering impact of housing and rents on inflation.

With automotive fuel costs down in annualised figures, it is the housing category that will continue to concern the RBA.

Housing represented the most significant price rise in the 12 months to October 2023, with 6.1% increase over that period. Rents were up 6.6% and would have been 8.1% if you took away the Federal Government’s recent rent assistance measures.

To tackle inflation and interest rate hikes, Governments must tackle housing supply.

This week’s ABS data makes that imperative pretty clear.

To read the ABS data underpinning the CPI Index indicator for October 2023, click the link below:

[Monthly Consumer Price Index Indicator, October 2023 | Australian Bureau of Statistics \(abs.gov.au\)](https://www.abs.gov.au/australian-bureau-of-statistics-reports-articles/2023/10/monthly-consumer-price-index-indicator-october-2023)

**8. The politics of planning – no part of Sydney should be exempt from carrying its fair share**





**Marrickville Station and surrounds – ripe for residential and mixed-use development**

It was disappointing to read an ABC article claiming that strategic sites in Labor held seats of Summer Hill and Canterbury could be exempt from significant housing uplift, despite benefitting from a world class metro.

The former Liberal Government was rightfully accused of protecting its seats from new housing – and the Minns Government had a powerful argument in the State election over the concept of a fair share of housing.

CEO of Urban Taskforce Tom Forrest expressed concern to the ABC if the Government was seeking to “protect” some of their seats from a fair share of housing.

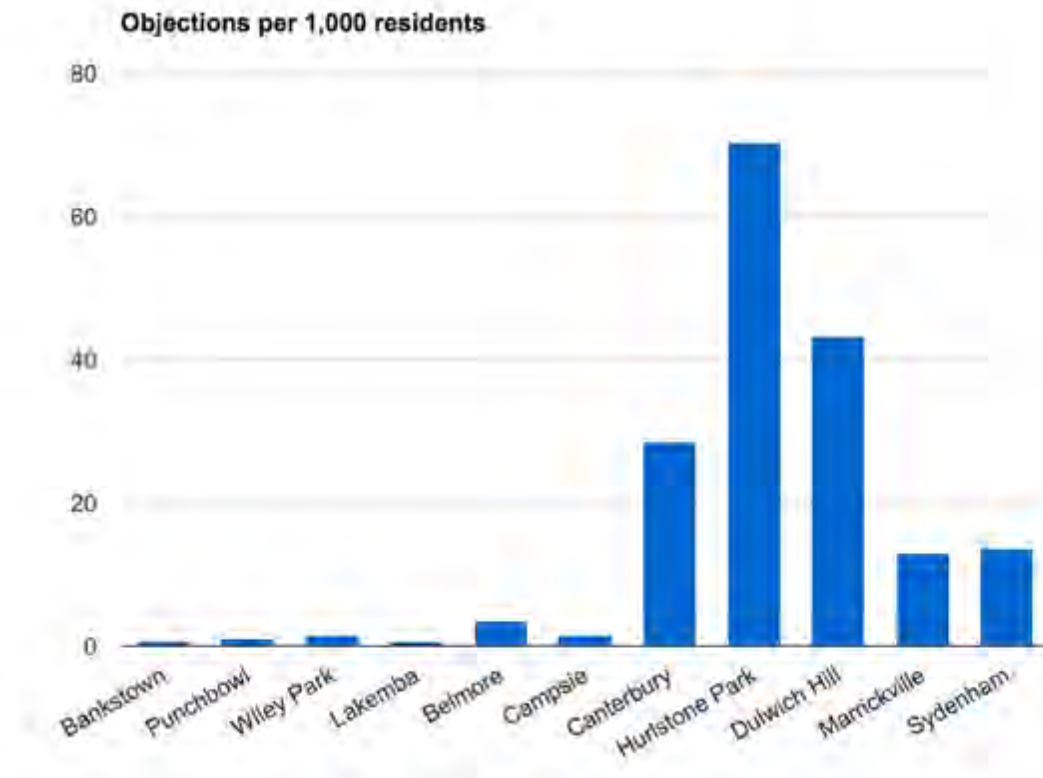
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***“... Just because they are Labor seats doesn't mean you undercook it...”***

**CEO Tom Forrest, ABC News, 26 November**

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In a graphical depiction of the politics of NIMBYism, the number of objections received per 100 residents against the proposals of the former Government along the new metro predominately came from Canterbury, Hurlston Park, Dulwich Hill and Marrickville and Sydenham.



Source: Sydney Yimby, 1 August, 2023

And this is the story for much of Sydney – well heeled, politically aware, owners of property with high land values seeking to stop development and “preserve character” despite benefitting from billions of dollars of taxpayers’ funds on improved infrastructure.

Rent seeking behaviour at its worst.

[Suburbs in Labor's heartland left off priority shortlist for housing density rezoning along Sydney metro routes - ABC News](#)

## 9. Premier backs modular homes - now scrap the Planning ban in Sydney





**Modular housing can play a crucial role in solving the housing supply crisis.**

The Premier, Chris Minns, and Housing Minister, Rose Jackson are to be commended for keeping momentum of the use of prefabricated modular homes as one part of the way through the housing supply crisis.

Urban Taskforce has been pushing for a more liberal approach to modular homes as a relatively easy way of delivering good quality homes. In fact it was one of our "7 quick wins" document we released in the lead up to the NSW election.

Land lease developments are currently banned in the Sydney basin. This is a planning hangover from an outdated mindset which falsely equates leased land with caravan parks. As shown, modular accommodation has come a long way and now has the support of the NSW Building Commissioner, the Premier and the Minister for Housing and Homelessness.

But the policy team at Planning is yet to see the light. They have rebuffed several attempts to have the policy that excludes land leases for greater Sydney. This must change.

As easy win for the Government would obviously be to allow land lease developments in Sydney – affordable, quality with a high level of building compliance.

Not just for social housing – it's a great product for a range of end users – particular seniors' housing.

To read the release by the Premier and the Minister for Housing, click the link below:

[Media Release - Exploring modular housing to deliver more social homes sooner](#)

## 10. Heritage Council's warped priorities amidst a housing supply crisis



### The renewal of Central precinct – another test for the NSW Government

Last week Urban Taskforce highlighted the madness of seeking the preserve view corridors to the Central Station clock tower -politely suggesting we give those who oppose the development of Tech-Central an iPhone and let the Government get on with the job of healing the century old scar caused by the above ground rail tracks and terminus at Central.

This week the AFR's Aaron Patrick lined up the views of Heritage Council elite, who clearly have not read a thing the Premier has been saying – instead, backing a view corridor for a railway clock at the far south end of Sydney's CBD, and putting that ahead of high tech jobs and desperately needed, wonderfully designed urban renewal.

As Aaron Patrick forcefully writes, placing society's practical and pressing needs below that of heritage sensitivities is classic use of elite power.

As Marie Antoinette once exclaimed (before she was guillotined in 1793) "Let them eat cake" #



The Minns Government should give such 'aristocratic' views no quarter.

To read the AFR opinion piece, click the link below:

\*Please note this article may be paywall protected.

[Financial Review | The public servant being paid to hold back Sydney](#)

# *"Let them eat cake" is the traditional translation of the French phrase "["Qu'ils mangent de la brioche"](#)" said to have been spoken in the 18th century by "a great princess" upon being told that the [peasants](#) had no bread. The French phrase mentions [brioche](#), a bread enriched with butter and eggs, considered a luxury food. The quote is taken to reflect either the princess's frivolous disregard for the starving peasants or her poor understanding of their plight. (Wikipedia).*

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## 11. Seniors suffering under housing stress





New research from National Seniors Australia shows that housing affordability is imparting almost 2 out of 3 respondents aged over 50 years.

The research shows that 39% of older renters experienced severe cost of living impacts because of rising living costs.

This type of hard data puts the indulgent bleatings of NIMBY councils into context.

To read the report, click the link below:

[2023-NSA-Housing-report.pdf](https://nationalseniors.com.au/2023-NSA-Housing-report.pdf)  
([nationalseniors.com.au](https://nationalseniors.com.au))

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## 12. Public Service Super fund investing billions in UK infrastructure and housing – go figure



A key part of the debate around housing affordability has been the struggle of public servants like teachers, nurses and police to afford to live close to their place of employment.

Rather than backing key working housing with big investments here in NSW, Aware Super (formerly First State Super and the super fund of a large majority of NSW public servants) is apparently preparing to pump billions of funds into UK infrastructure funds, even going so far in this direction as to open an office in London focussing on property, infrastructure and private equity.

Aware has pledged £5bn of investment into Britain, including investing in energy transition and affordable housing.

It comes as Aware Super in April 2022 bought a 22% stake in a build to rent operation in the UK.

It is tragically ironic that NSW is scrambling to deliver housing for key workers, yet the public servant's default super fund is directing billions offshore into PPP's. This is one of a growing number of cases where the Super funds are washing themselves in green and social justice causes, while allocating investments offshore.

It's a great shame we can't see this money (ultimately paid for by NSW taxpayers through NSW government employer contributions) go into Australian housing.



To read the AFR article of Aware Super's forays into the UK infrastructure and property market, click the link below:

\*Please note this article may be paywall protected.

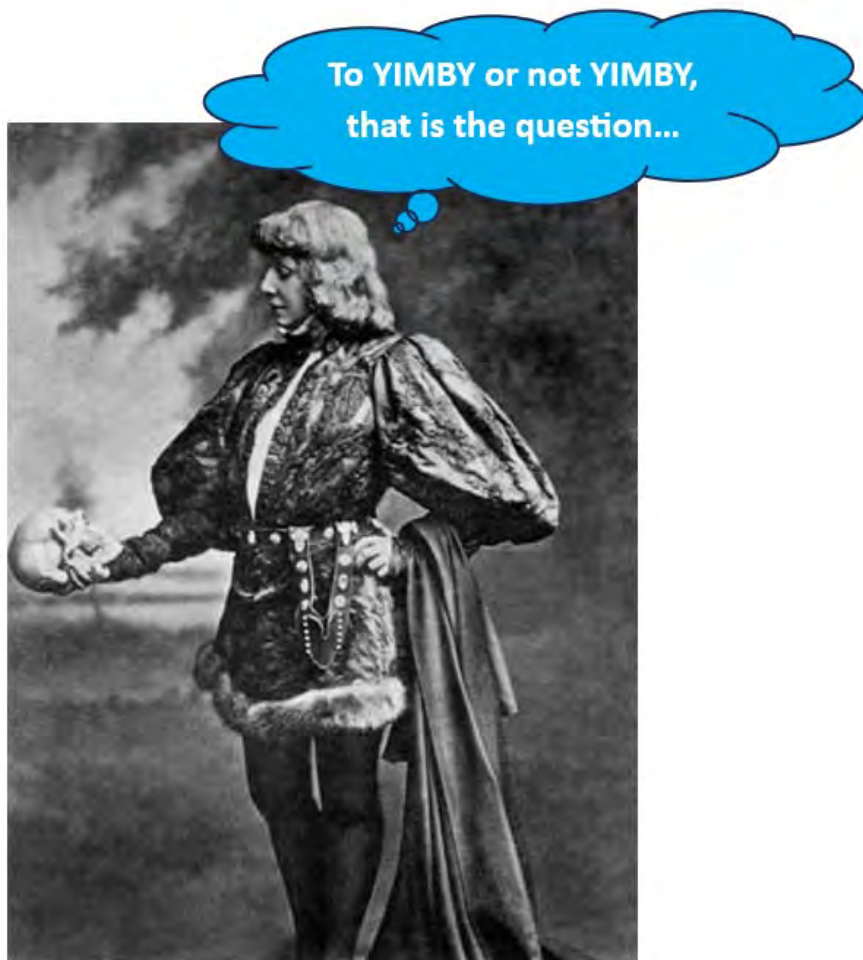
[IFM Investors, Aware Super build \\$29b war chest for Britain at Prime Minister Rishi Sunak's global investment summit \(afr.com\)](#)

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### 13. Is the YIMBY movement "left" or "right"?

Crikey this week published an article this week analysing the ideological bent of the Yes In My Back Yard (YIMBY) movement.

Reflecting its millennial roots, all things happen very quickly in the nascent YIMBY movement, now entering its more introspective existentialist phase after its first youthful flourishes.



...apologies to the Bard

Regardless of its politics – it is unapologetically pro-housing for those who the “system” has hitherto ignored.

While some may be left, others more right, one thing’s for sure – those young Liberals who penned their own YIMBY manifesto at the Liberal Party conference over the weekend (see story 6) are feeling decidedly *“left right out”!*

To read the article and ponder yourself, click the link below:

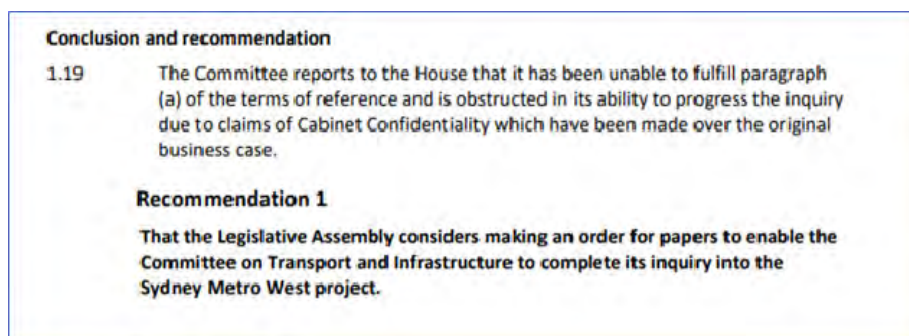
[Is the YIMBY movement progressive or conservative? \(crikey.com.au\)](https://www.crikey.com.au/2023/11/14/is-the-yimby-movement-progressive-or-conservative/)

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## 14. Parliamentary Inquiry into Sydney Metro West – where’s the business case?

The Government dominated Parliamentary committee looking into the Metro West project has recommended that the Legislative Assembly make an order for papers over the original business case, after the NSW Cabinet Office claimed the documents are Cabinet in Confidence.

Urban Taskforce would be interested in seeing the business case, as we have always said the significant expenditure of public funds should always deliver what is contained in the case that went to Cabinet or a sub-committee of Cabinet. Too often we have seen outcomes such as housing and jobs eroded away in the face of NIMBY opposition.



To read the report, click the link below:

[Interim report -Sydney Metro West project \(November 2023\).pdf \(nsw.gov.au\)](https://www.nsw.gov.au/interim-report-sydney-metro-west-project-november-2023.pdf)

## 15. Other News

### 1. Parramatta CBD Planning Framework Review

At the City of Parramatta Council (Council) Meeting on 20 November 2023 Council resolved in relation to the Planning Investigation Areas (PIA) to endorse the phased work program to review the planning controls for the PIAs that were identified as part of the [Parramatta CBD Planning Framework Review](#).

The complete resolution on this matter is available here [Minutes of Council - Monday, 20 November 2023 \(nsw.gov.au\)](#), Item 13.8 starting on page 9.

The report on Item 13.8 is available here: [Agenda of Council - Monday, 20 November 2023 \(nsw.gov.au\)](#) starting on page 566.

The endorsed recommendation for Item 13.8 was to adopt a phased work program beginning with the North-East PIA in early 2024. The recommended work program is as follows:

#### **North-East PIA – Phase 1 (Early 2024)**

Investigation and planning work has previously been completed on the North-East (NE) PIA as part of the [NE PIA Planning Strategy](#). Phase 1 will commence further technical work and the preparation of a planning proposal to determine future planning controls for the area.

#### **Southern PIA – Phase 2 (Early 2024)**

Phase 2 proposes planning review to begin in early 2024 for the Southern PIA.

#### **Northern PIA – Phase 3 (2025)**

Phase 3 proposes planning review to begin in 2025 for the Northern PIA.

#### **Eastern PIA – TBD**

Not proceeding with strategic planning work at this time pending outcomes of the Church Street North State-led rezoning and future major transport infrastructure projects in addition to monitoring and analysing related impacts on the precinct.

### 2. Federal Government makes 2 new appointments to Housing Australia Board

Federal Minister for Housing, Julie Collins announced 2 further appointments to the Housing Australia Board, which will in part have oversight of the HAFF fund. The 2 appointments are:

- **Mary Papathanasiou** - 30 years' experience in investing and managing infrastructure assets globally and in institutional funds management
- **Mary Ploughman** - extensive experience in leadership, financial services, structured finance, securitisation, capital markets, governance

and risk management across a range of financial service institutions, infrastructure and not-for-profit boards

To read the Minister's release. Click the link below:

[New Appointments to Housing Australia](#)

### 3. Planning Portal updates

DPE has provided a series of updates on the portal:



## Upcoming enhancements to the NSW Planning Portal

### Release for 1 December 2023

#### Housing and Productivity Contribution

To align with the introduction of the Housing and Productivity Contribution brought into effect by the [Environmental Planning and Assessment Amendment \(Housing and Productivity Contribution\) Bill 2023](#) changes have been made to functionality in the NSW Planning Portal.

The functionality applies to certain residential, commercial and industrial developments within the 43 local government areas located in the Greater Sydney, Illawarra-Shoalhaven, Lower Hunter and Central Coast regions.

#### Enhancements to digital services

The following digital services will be enhanced: Online DA, State DA and Payment adjustment services.

#### Summary of changes

- The Housing and Productivity contribution will be applied, where applicable, to Modification and Review of Determination development application types.
- Enhancement for the Department to adjust the amount payable for Housing and Productivity Contributions.
- The Department will have the ability to apply credits from works in-kind and planning agreements to offset contribution obligations.



## Release for 8 December 2023

### BASIX service

Following the release of the BASIX service on 1 October 2023, there have been a number of updates to functionality. Information about these are regularly updated on the [BASIX support page](#).

### Summary of changes

- Ability for an applicant to assign the payment of BASIX certificates to another party.
- Ability for the assigned payer to pay for multiple BASIX certificates in the one transaction.

## Release for 14 December 2023

### Infrastructure Contributions Estimator

The Infrastructure Contributions Estimator has been developed to assist applicants with identifying an estimation of the Housing and Productivity Contribution that may be levied for their development prior to submitting an application.

This functionality will be accessed via the NSW Planning Portal Spatial Viewer or via a content page on the NSW Planning Portal.

### MyHome Planner

[MyHome Planner](#) will be expanded to include a step-by-step guide on the process of a knock-down rebuild development for applicants. The tool currently provides clarity and instruction for community members to understand the complete process of building a project home.

## Application Programming Interface impacts

Impacts on existing Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) resulting from these releases were communicated to vendors and councils at the Technical Reference Group meeting on 21 November 2023. We encourage you to speak to your vendor for more information.

### Support

Please note our Customer Support team is continuing to work through a backlog of customer enquiries. We acknowledge and apologise for the inconvenience these delays may cause customers of the NSW Planning Portal and encourage you to view the available support materials prior to contacting the support team.

### Support resources

Quick Reference Guides (QRGs) will be updated for councils, certifiers and

agencies to reflect these upcoming enhancements. These documents will be published within the Knowledge Management section of the online digital services and in the [Applicant resources](#) section of the NSW Planning Portal. Release summaries will be provided on the [News and Announcements](#) section of the Portal following the release.

### **Customer support arrangements over the Christmas and New Year period**

From close of business on Friday 22 December 2023 until start of business on Monday 8 January 2024, there will be reduced staffing within the NSW Planning Portal Customer Support team. Please note, support will be unavailable on the public holidays (25, 26 and 27 December 2023 and 1 January 2024). If you require assistance during this period, please contact ServiceNSW on 1300 650 908 or submit an enquiry [online](#).

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## **16. Council Watch**



### **North Sydney Council**

The letter from the Minister for Planning seeking to work with Councils on housing supply has elicited a panicky response from North Sydney Council - which has sat on its hands and watch approvals tank since the highs of 2017.

Mayor Zoe Baker's minute is one of those "woe is me", "the dog ate my homework" and "outsiders just don't understand the difficulties in living in one of the most privileged parts of the world" sort of minute.

It seeks to blame everyone else for their lack of action in terms of housing.

The Mayor was even fighting a rearguard action to save the GCC – no wonder considering the last Sydney Regional Plan by the GCC imposed a pitiful 560 new dwellings a year on North Sydney LGA (Parramatta was targeted with 4,700 new homes each year, Blacktown 3,300)

This is a council that has sought to do everything it can to thwart housing supply. This is Council which is spending millions of ratepayers' dollars in legal fees each year to block new development. [Sydney council spends millions blocking developments, as mayor at risk of losing her view \(msn.com\)](#) It consistently seeks to

limit housing potential, despite receiving billions of dollars' worth of new infrastructure paid for by the NSW taxpayer.

It has preserved a windswept wasteland of a CBD, dead at night, and failing to fulfill its potential as a northern adjunct of the Sydney CBD.

Now it is thumbing its nose at the Minister for Planning's efforts to deliver more homes.

Provoking the Minister for Planning in a Government elected in part to ensure a fairer share of housing across Sydney is perhaps not the wisest move.

It may not end well for North Sydney NIMBYs.

To read the Mayoral ~~rant~~ Minute (note: Urban Taskforce considers an occasional "rant" a good thing!), click the link below:

[MM03: Correspondence from the Hon. Paul Scully, MP Minister for Planning re housing density and the housing crisis \(urbantaskforce.com.au\)](#)

## **Ryde Council**

The entire saga of the former Ryde Civic Centre resembles an absurdist play.

The latest chapter is that Council won't sell off the site for housing/employment, but will keep the site vacant. The giant concrete toilet bowl will have to wait ...

The English Upper classes used to spend their wealth on supercilious architectural creations known as "follies"

Seems the "*upper-class twit*" equivalents these days (including the NSW Heritage Council who gave the demolition the green light) just like knocking down a great example of post war international style architecture....



And leaving it as vacant land....





*An absurdist installation from Ryde Council signifying all the is wrong and defunct in the world of Heritage.*

To read the SMH coverage of this farce, click the link below:

[Ryde Central site not sold off, but to remain hole in ground \(smh.com.au\)](https://www.smh.com.au/ryde-central-site-not-sold-off-but-to-remain-hole-in-ground-20171128)

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## 17. UTA in the News

Urban Taskforce CEO spoke with the Daily Telegraph and repeated his call for height and density around all public transport infrastructure, especially the underutilised stations along Sydney's North Shore and North West;

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***“..... It costs a lot of money to upgrade a train station, [but] pretty much no one is actually using those stations compared to others ... It's like building a bridge between two islands and then not letting anyone to live on them...”***

**CEO Tom Forrest, The Daily Telegraph, November 28**

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To read the full article, click the link below:

\*Please note this article may be paywall protected.

[The Daily Telegraph | Housing advocates call for density at north and west Sydney suburbs which received the NSW government's \\$2.2b train upgrades](https://www.dailytelegraph.com.au/news/housing-advocates-call-for-density-at-north-and-west-sydney-suburbs-which-received-the-nsw-governments-2.2b-train-upgrades/story)

### ABC Sydney 702

In a wide ranging interviews, ABC 702 host Sarah Macdonald raised an array of issues with CEO Tom Forrest:

On immigration:

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***“... At the end of the day, we need to have a growing population to support the taxpayer base, to pay for aged care and the broader needs of an ageing population, people that often don't have superannuation to support them...”***

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On car parking restrictions

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***“... I don’t support artificial restrictions on car parking. And the reason is because you immediately discriminate against people who may need parking – like tradespeople who need a vehicle for work...”***

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On infill affordable housing reforms

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***“...The State Government’s push towards increased bonuses for height and density along with affordable housing is a sensible solution. It encourages both housing supply, which puts down pressure on house prices – as well as including 15% of that development for affordable housing ...”***

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On removing negative gearing

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***“...Negative gearing is a minor contributor to the issues we face. Keep in mind that a lot of mum and dad investors don’t invest in the share market, they don’t invest in bonds, they don’t invest in futures – they invest in property. If you suddenly remove negative gearing from them, it would be a massive blow to these people and it would undermine housing supply. This was tried in the 1990’s and it was a failure...”***

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On accusation of land banking

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***“...if the bank won’t lend you the money to build and construct – that’s not land banking – that’s the finance system saying there’s not enough profit to be made. ...”***

CEO Tom Forrest, 702 Sydney, November 29

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## 18. Members in the News

\*Please note, the links used below may be paywall protected.

"... **Billbergia** has confirmed that it has submitted plans for the final stage, titled *Bennelong Cove*, of its masterplanned at Wentworth Point, designed by FJC Studio..." [read more...](#)

Architecture and Design, November 24

"... **EG Plots Blockbuster Fortitude Valley Twin Tower...**" [read more...](#)

The Urban Developer, November 28

"... **Aqualand's** collaboration with award-winning landscape architects Turf Design Studio has resulted in a design that successfully integrates the project with the unique local environs of the characterful suburb..." [read more...](#)

The Urban Developer, November 28

"... **Lendlease's** head of development Tom Mackellar said governments in other countries in which it operates had moved more quickly to tackle the problem..." [read more...](#)

The Daily Telegraph, November 29

"... With almost \$2-billion in healthcare property assets, **Dexus** is focusing on opportunities in some key subsectors for its latest equity raise..." [read more...](#)

The Urban Developer, November 29

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