

MEDIA RELEASE

15 June 2024

Minns Government funding for State planners should speed up rezonings and assessments for state significant housing proposals

Acting CEO of Urban Taskforce Stephen Fenn, today welcomed news that the NSW budget would fund planners to speed up state led rezonings and assessments.

Other States like Victoria and Queensland have already made commitments to turn around approvals quickly. With the National Housing Accord starting in two weeks, the Department of Planning, Housing and Infrastructure needs to be getting state significant development applications out the door in record time.

Faster, more certain planning pathways are critical in delivering more housing.

Building the capacity and expertise of the planning assessment team within the Department, which has already been given more responsibility for the affordable infill housing incentives and will need to assess the large Tier One transport-oriented development accelerated precincts, is critical if NSW has any chance of delivering the 377,000 new homes needed under the National Housing Accord.

This should also allow Planning, over time, to take on more assessments and approvals - particularly high value, high yield housing proposals which are often complex and involve other large infrastructure agencies.

The NSW Government needs to consider declaring any residential development proposal with a capital investment value of more than \$50 million (excluding land) as state significant and fast-track its rezoning and assessment.

Today's announcement is an investment in the future capability and workload of the State planning assessment team, and it is welcomed.

Funding for the much-maligned Planning Portal was positive news, as anyone who had used the portal would understand its significant limitations.

Bringing the portal into the 21st century can only reduce the unnecessary delays and frustrations experienced by developers in getting projects through the system.

Urban Taskforce saw potential in the NSW Government's financing guarantee pilot to explore how the state could more directly support the housing industry to secure finance, increase the viability of housing projects and speed up the construction of new homes.

It recognises that besides the planning system, costs and delays in obtaining finance are inhibiting efforts to deliver more housing in NSW. On top of escalating construction costs and labour supply, finance is increasingly difficult.

We want to work with the Government and the financial sector in ensuring that initiatives in this area are workable and focussed on the high yield developments that will make an enormous difference to housing supply figures.

The reappointment of Peter Achterstraat as the Productivity and Equality Commissioner will allow him to build on the good work the NSW Productivity Commission has done over recent years in highlighting the impacts of and solutions to the housing supply crisis.

It is an acknowledgement that more work needs to be done if NSW is to get anywhere near the targets set by the National Housing Accord.

The comments and analysis above can be attributed to Stephen Fenn, Acting CEO, Urban Taskforce.

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

Media Enquires: Stephen Fenn, A/Chief Executive Officer: 0423 027 657

Follow us on:

