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MEDIA RELEASE

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Urban Taskforce welcomes draft Sydney Plan

Urban Taskforce Australia CEO, Tom Forrest, said the release of the draft Sydney Region Plan finally signals the end of the Greater Sydney Commission's Metropolis of Three Cities plan from 2018 which turned out to be no more than a strategic planner's wish list – a fanciful handbrake on Sydney's growth.

The old Region Plan is way out of date and has been holding NSW back.

It was released by the erstwhile Premier Gladys Berejiklian and Greater Sydney Commission Chair, Lucy Turnbull in 2018. Since then, the Government has changed, the Greater Sydney (Cities) Commission has been abolished, we've come through the pandemic and housing supply has become the focal point of planning. A lot has changed.

Today's draft plan is a welcome step in the modernisation of the State's planning system.

The new Region Plan is less prescriptive and more flexible and aspirational. Flexibility is critical to allow the Plan to cater for changing circumstances like we have seen since 2018.

It puts housing supply at the front and centre of strategic planning. This change supports the recent amendments to the EP&A Act which also, for the first time, made housing supply an objective of the Act.

The new draft Plan – in the form of three draft strategic planning documents – has refocused on the urgent need for housing and jobs.

It calls on councils to establish affordable housing policies which is both a risk – and an opportunity to establish consistency and remove duplication of taxes which has frustrated housing supply in many locations. It highlights the need to support housing growth with infrastructure development, and it casts aside the failed industrial lands policies of the 2018 document.

The revised policy on industrial land is far more flexible and will benefit both industry, retail development and mixed use development for areas where industrial land zoning is no longer fit for purpose, or mixed uses can successfully co-locate, as they do in the UK, many cities of Europe, Japan, the USA and even in the inner south of Sydney (who doesn't love a local sorbet factory store, micro-brewery or gin distillery!).

Urban Taskforce has worked closely with DPHI on changes to the new draft Region Plan to give effect to the pro-housing supply policy stance taken by both the NSW Government and the Opposition.

Urban Taskforce will now work with our membership to review the draft Plans in detail.

*The comments, tables and analysis above can be attributed to **Tom Forrest**, CEO, Urban Taskforce.*

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