Urban Taskforce AUSTRALIA

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MEDIA RELEASE

7 January 2026

ABS housing approvals – good … but not great

Urban Taskforce CEO, Tom Forrest, said today that the latest figures from the ABS on housing approvals are showing an on-going roller coaster ride but the trend is heading in the right direction.

A solid improvement in the month of November 2025 comes off the back of a very weak result the previous month.

NSW dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 07/01/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
November 2025	2,868	1,980	4,848
October 2025	1,834	1,934	3,768
September 2025	2,805	1,929	4,734
August 2025	1,905	1,788	3,693
July 2025	2,238	1,852	4,090
June 2025	4,089	1,845	5,934
May 2025	2,429	1,880	4,309
April 2025	1,934	1,978	3,912
March 2025	2,256	1,930	4,186
February 2025	1,488	1,898	3,386
January 2025	4,459	1,800	6,259
December 2024	2,478	1,820	4,298
November 2024	1,874	1,749	3,623

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 07/01/2026

The annual performance in NSW saw 53,417 dwellings approved in the 12 months to November, 2025. The annual Accord target for NSW is 76,000 completed dwellings.

We remain a long way away from achieving that.

Since the start of the Housing Accord, NSW has only delivered 66.9% of its target, and November continued that trend. In the first 17 months of the Housing Accord, we needed almost 107,000 approvals. We got just over 71,000. There is a lot of lost ground to recover between now and the end of June, 2029.

NSW annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 07/01/2026

	Multi-Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end November 2025	30,783	22,634	53,417
12 months till end November 2024	20,791	22,527	43,318
12 months till end November 2023	23,513	23,072	46,585
12 months till end November 2022	25,685	28,050	53,735
12 months till end November 2021	31,335	31,745	63,080
12 months till end November 2020	24,314	25,751	50,065
12 months till end November 2019	26,916	25,699	52,615
12 months till end November 2018	35,429	31,033	66,462
12 months till end November 2017	42,552	29,638	72,190
12 months till end November 2016	46,698	29,810	76,508

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 07/01/2026

With the support of the NSW Opposition, significant planning reforms were passed at the end of 2025. These will flow through into dwelling approval numbers later in the year, as will the work of the Housing Delivery Authority. So there is some cause for optimism.

The key to converting these approvals into new homes will be feasibility and infrastructure funding. New homes will not get built unless it is financially feasible to invest in them. That's where the focus must be in 2026. Urban Taskforce Australia says the path forward is clear:

- **Reduce fees, taxes and charges.**
- **Improve building regulation and construction workplace productivity.**
- **Significantly boost housing related infrastructure (including support for public open space).**

Increased housing costs push inflation up. Higher inflation causes the RBA to lift interest rates. Increased interest rates drive up construction cost and worsen new home affordability!

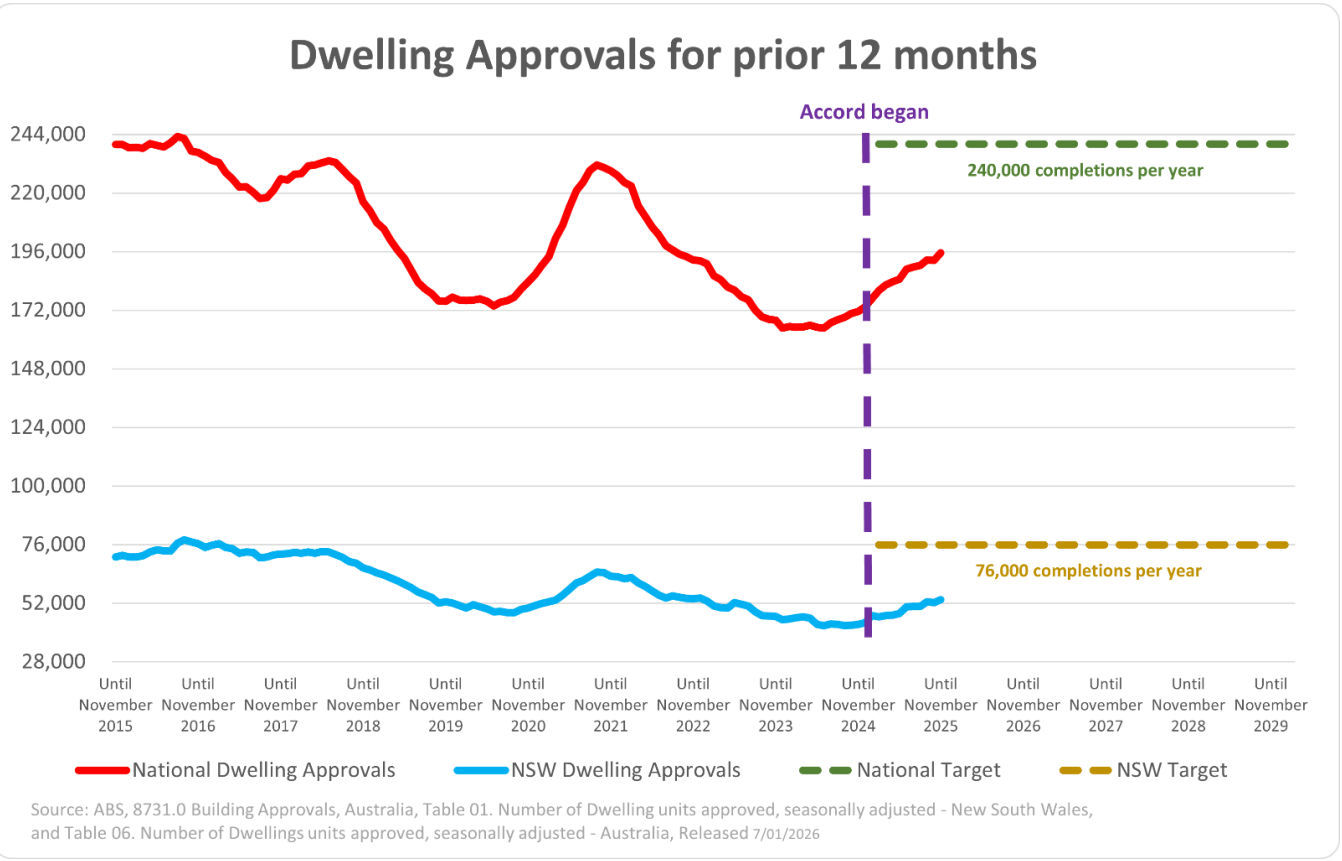
Only cuts to fees, taxes and charges, along with a focus on improved building construction productivity and reduced planning red tape can break this vicious circle. It's time that Jim Chalmers and Anthony Albanese focussed on this vicious economic circle.

The improvements to the planning system need to be backed up by Federal and State Treasurers taking some of the burden off the array of fees, taxes and charges being placed on new home builds and new home buyers.

On a National level, Victoria has come off the boil following substantial increases in land taxes and development fees. While Victoria continues to outperform NSW, the trend is stronger and the rise is steeper in NSW.

Queensland and Western Australia are both seeing improved results, but remain well under their Housing Accord targets.

The following three charts show improvement across Australia, but not enough to achieve the Accord Targets. That means real pain for home buyers and renters in the years to come.

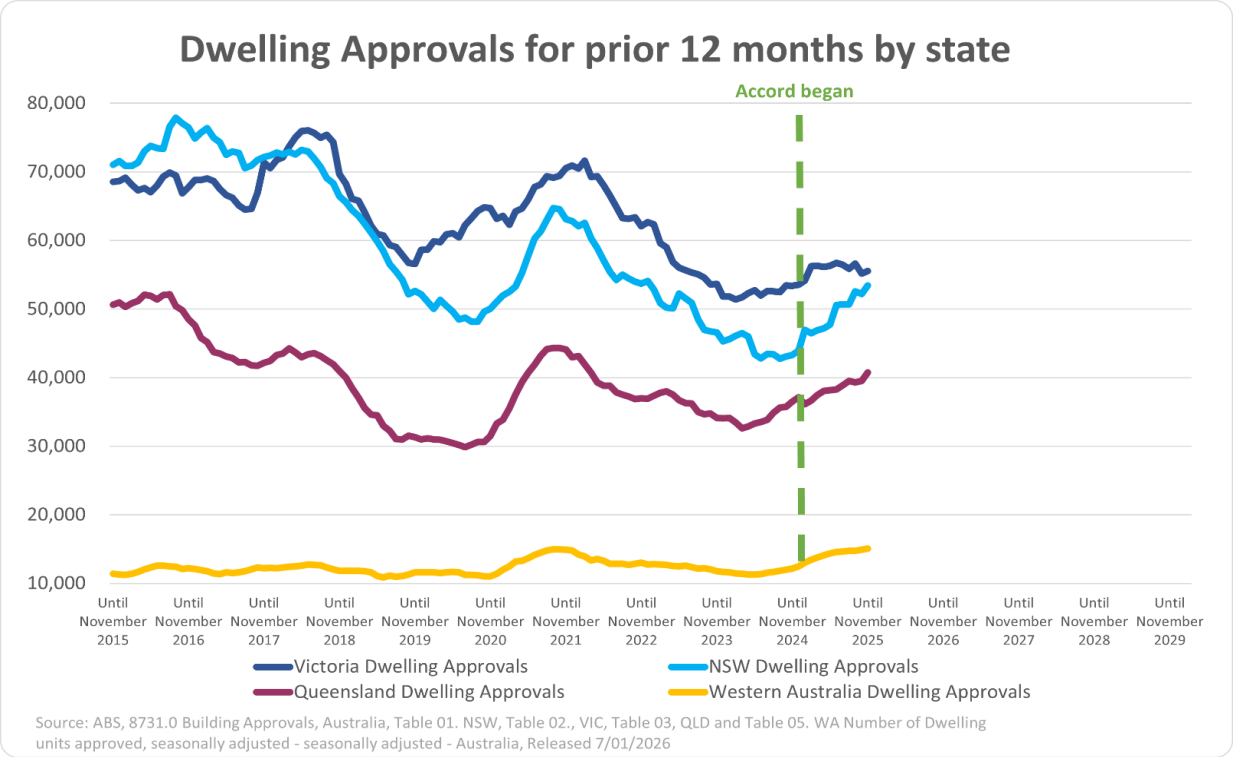


Source: ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of Dwelling units approved, seasonally adjusted - New South Wales, and Table 06. Number of Dwellings units approved, seasonally adjusted - Australia, Released 7/01/2026

National annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 07/01/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end November 2025	82,731	112,792	195,523
12 months till end November 2024	61,072	110,503	171,574
12 months till end November 2023	65,300	102,604	167,902
12 months till end November 2022	75,721	116,791	192,516
12 months till end November 2021	78,529	150,535	229,064
12 months till end November 2020	69,378	114,208	183,587
12 months till end November 2019	69,880	105,759	175,637
12 months till end November 2018	94,287	122,047	216,335
12 months till end November 2017	106,975	118,923	225,897
12 months till end November 2016	117,079	119,630	236,708

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 06. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - Australia, - Released: 07/01/2026



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

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