MEDIA RELEASE

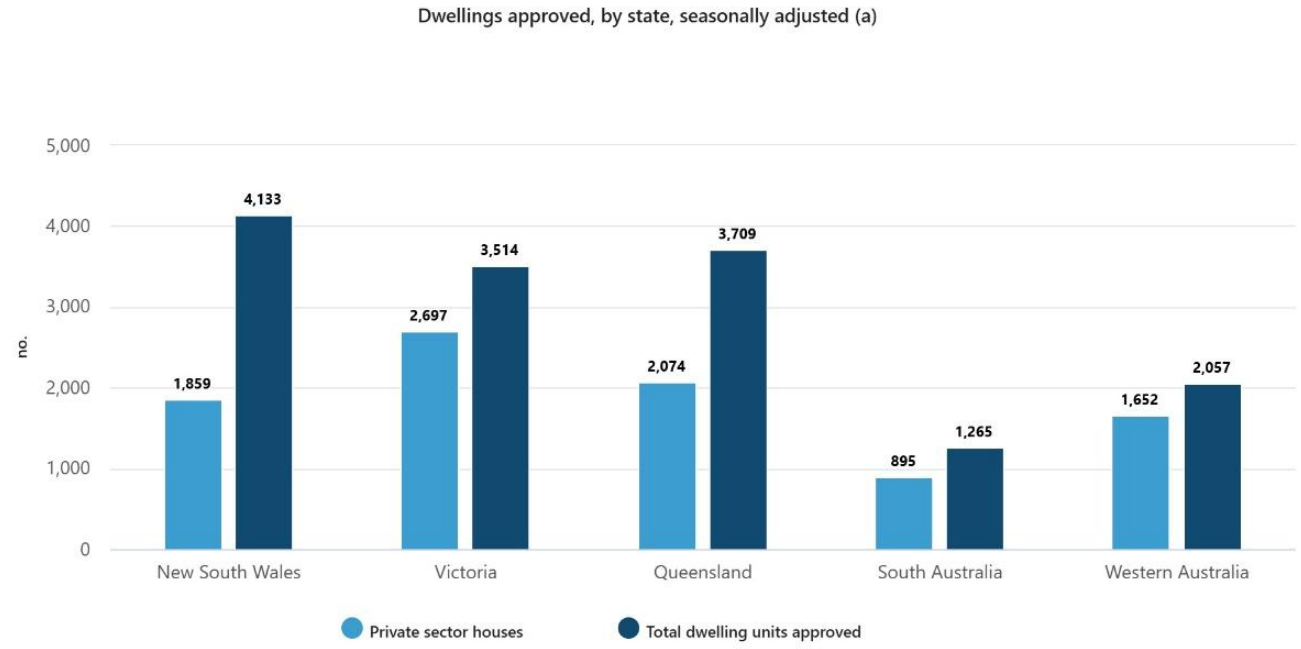
3 February 2026

ABS housing approvals: annual results getting better with NSW hitting the lead

Urban Taskforce CEO, Tom Forrest, said today that the latest figures from the ABS on housing approvals for the month of December 2025 show that NSW has finally hit the top of the table in terms of monthly approvals (see Chart 1 below).

This is also reflected in the annualised data, where NSW is making ground on Victoria (see Chart 3).

Chart 1



a) Seasonally adjusted estimates are not published for NT and ACT for all dwelling types. Private sector houses are not published for Tasmania.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Total dwelling approvals fall in December 3/02/2026

While NSW did well in December compared to the other states, there was the normal seasonal drop off. We will be looking to see approvals flow through the newly established state-led planning pathways as 2026 progresses.

However, the big loser was Victoria, with a massive drop of 1,667 approvals in December, recording its lowest numbers in the last 13 months. With a total of only 3,514 approvals in the month of December, it is the worst monthly result for that State since June, 2013.

While the trend is positive, approval numbers in NSW need to continue growing. There is a long way to go to get to the levels we need to achieve the National Housing Accord's new dwelling completion targets, but it would appear that the reforms in NSW are starting to have an impact.

Both NSW and national results are looking better for the last 12 months, compared to the year before. The 2025 calendar year saw 53,298 in NSW (an increase of 9,254, or 21% on 2024), while national results increased by 22,274 or 12.8% to 195,731. See Tables 2 and 3.

Table 1

NSW dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 03/02/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
December 2025	2,254	1,879	4,133
November 2025	2,848	1,973	4,821
October 2025	1,835	1,935	3,770
September 2025	2,786	1,932	4,718
August 2025	1,908	1,792	3,700
July 2025	2,204	1,911	4,115
June 2025	4,075	1,852	5,927
May 2025	2,424	1,885	4,309
April 2025	1,918	1,982	3,900
March 2025	2,289	1,929	4,218
February 2025	1,503	1,902	3,405
January 2025	4,472	1,810	6,282
December 2024	2,515	1,835	4,350

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 03/02/2026

Table 2

NSW annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 03/02/2026

	Multi-Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	30,516	22,782	53,298
12 months till end December 2024	21,694	22,350	44,044
12 months till end December 2023	22,130	23,123	45,253
12 months till end December 2022	26,529	27,589	54,118
12 months till end December 2021	31,386	31,408	62,794
12 months till end December 2020	24,440	26,645	51,085
12 months till end December 2019	26,849	25,283	52,132
12 months till end December 2018	34,809	30,782	65,591
12 months till end December 2017	42,515	29,892	72,407
12 months till end December 2016	45,153	29,718	74,871

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 03/02/2026

Table 3

National annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 03/02/2026

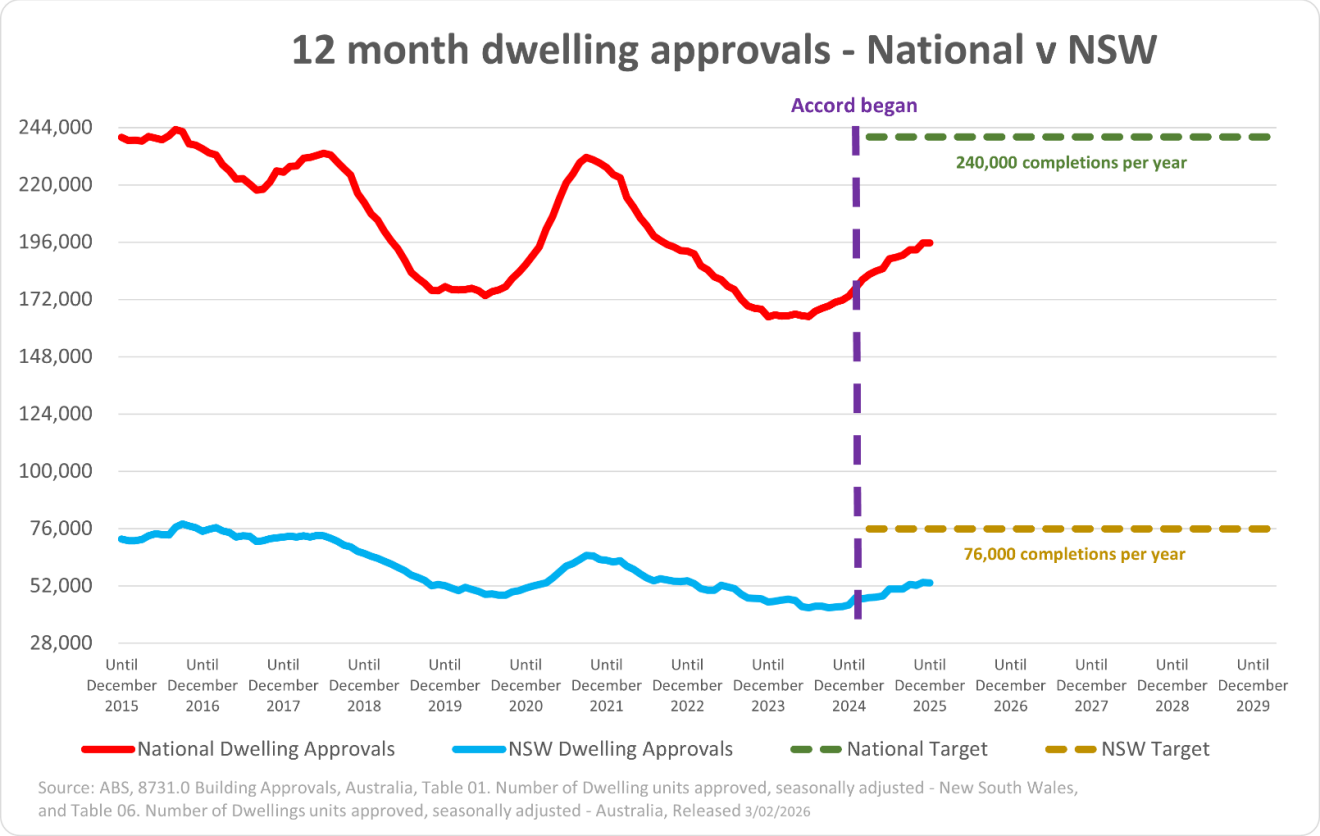
	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	82,326	113,406	195,731
12 months till end December 2024	62,667	110,792	173,457
12 months till end December 2023	62,004	102,690	164,693
12 months till end December 2022	76,965	115,323	192,285
12 months till end December 2021	79,653	147,574	227,228
12 months till end December 2020	67,842	118,713	186,555
12 months till end December 2019	71,948	105,329	177,277
12 months till end December 2018	91,782	120,929	212,709
12 months till end December 2017	105,662	119,740	225,403
12 months till end December 2016	116,305	118,770	235,071

ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 06. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - Australia, - Released: 03/02/2026

Nationally, these are encouraging results and show an improving trend in housing supply approvals.

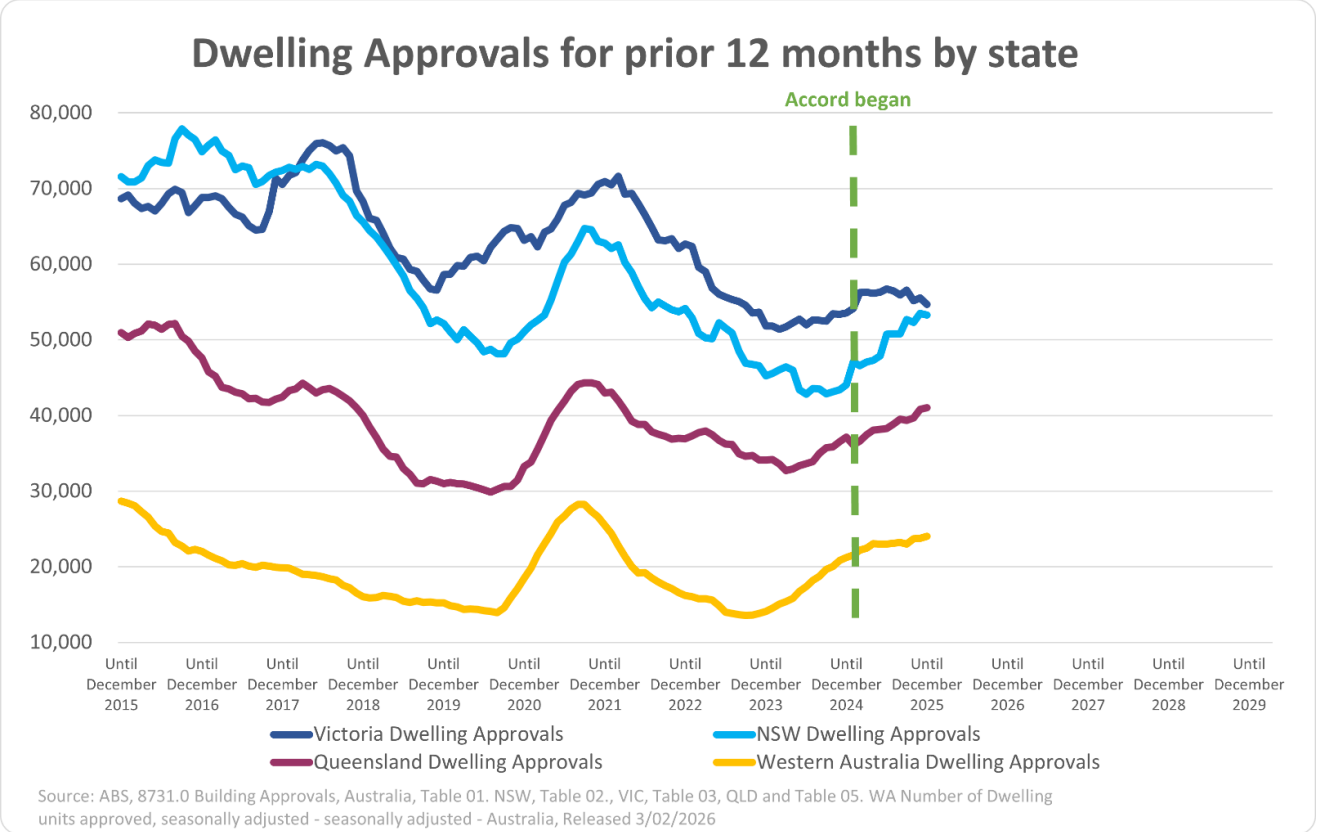
The National Housing Accord needs 240,000 dwellings to be completed per year across the country – 76,000 per year in NSW. Approvals are the first step but even if they all resulted in new dwellings being completed, we remain way behind the targets. (See Chart 2 below)

Chart 2



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 3/02/2026

Chart 3



Source: ABS, 8731.0 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. NSW, Table 02., VIC, Table 03, QLD and Table 05. WA Number of Dwelling units approved, seasonally adjusted - seasonally adjusted - Australia, Released 3/02/2026

Australia's National Housing Accord targets are vital signs of how we are faring in delivering housing for a growing population. Greater housing supply puts downward pressure on prices.

NSW is the most important market in Australia, representing almost 32% of the population. If the planning performance in NSW keeps improving, Australia has a chance of improving the housing affordability crisis.

It's pleasing to see NSW back on the top of the table, albeit based on only a single month's results. With the continuing rollout of the planning reforms and ongoing bi-partisan support to remove barriers to development, we can stay there.

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

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