

MEDIA RELEASE

8 April 2026

ABS data promising - but interest rate hikes and rising diesel costs threaten a worsening crisis in housing

Tom Forrest, CEO of the Urban Taskforce, today called on the Commonwealth and State Governments to respond immediately to the impacts of the supply shock that is smashing the nation's development and construction sector.

Today's ABS data on new dwelling commencements and completions up until December 2025 shows some promising signs across the nation in terms of new build commencements.

Annualised national dwelling commencements by type

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	81,979	113,321	196,118
12 months till end December 2024	60,559	107,278	168,492
12 months till end December 2023	64,261	100,516	165,923
12 months till end December 2022	62,967	119,191	182,923
12 months till end December 2021	78,965	149,407	229,295
12 months till end December 2020	69,352	113,558	183,763
12 months till end December 2019	69,399	105,145	175,694
12 months till end December 2018	103,117	119,867	224,275
12 months till end December 2017	98,945	115,566	216,281
12 months till end December 2016	114,095	117,775	234,326

8752.0 Building Activity, Australia, TABLE 38. Number of Dwelling Unit Completions by Sector, States and Territories, released 08/04/2026.

However – seeing this translate into completed new homes is now at risk.

Almost every line item involved with the delivery of new housing has spiked since the Middle East crisis began. Today's ABS data pre-dates the war in the Iran and the two increases in interest rates (which occurred in early February and in mid-March, 2026).

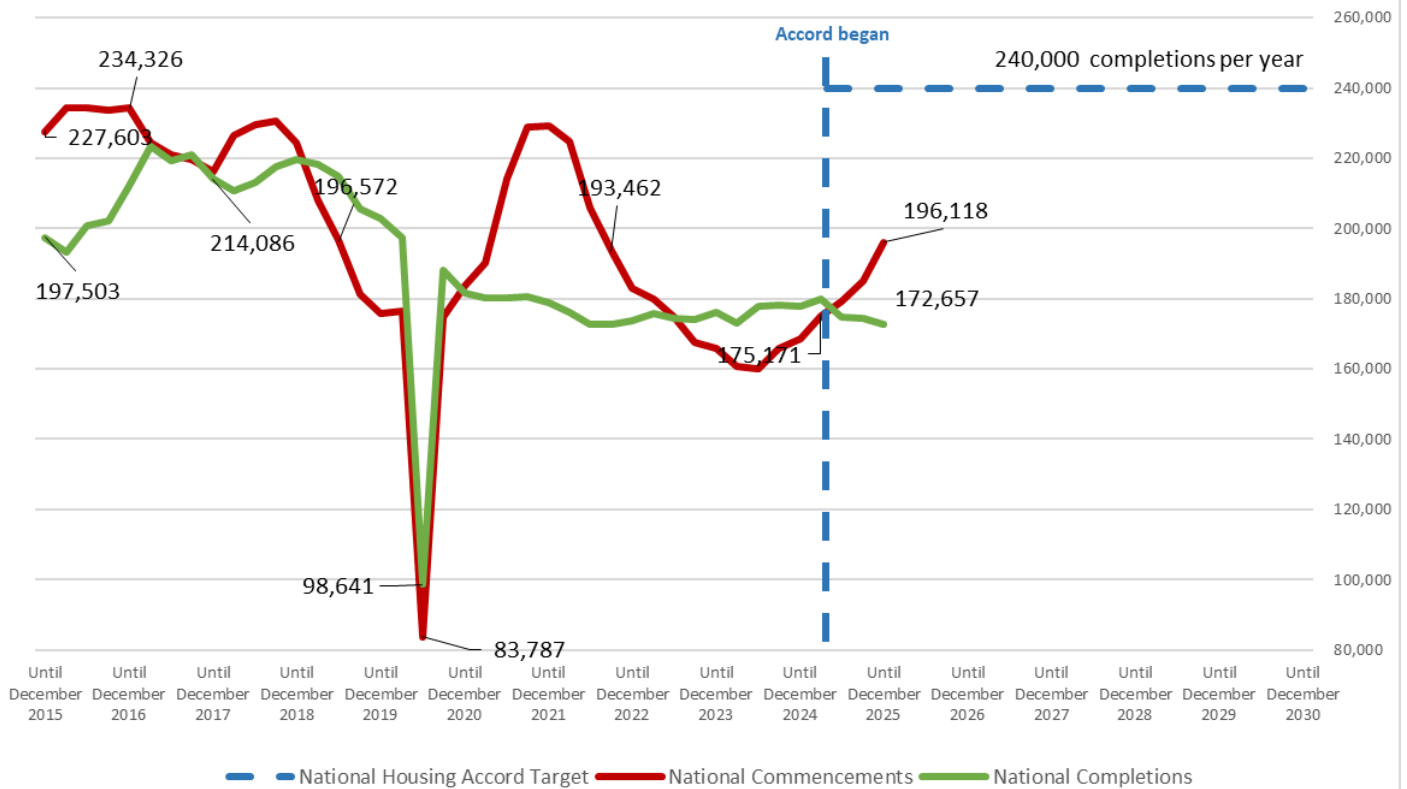
Developers, quantity surveyors and cost estimators are all reporting a spike in construction costs of between 10 and 15% since the start of the year.

The feasibility of delivering housing was already holding new supply back. The impact of the war in Iran and the shock jump in diesel prices will cripple supply.

The news in December was promising. Since then, project feasibility has turned to custard.

Urgent relief needs to be rolled out in terms of suspending the fees, taxes and charges placed on new housing. Measures that may have been scheduled for announcement in upcoming Budgets must be brought forward and implemented right now.

National dwelling commencements & completions rolling four-quarter chart



Source: 8752.0 Building Activity, Australia. TABLE 34. Number of Dwelling Unit Commencements by Sector, States and Territories & TABLE 33 and TABLE 37 - Release 08/04/2026

For all the talk of the National Housing Accord, 18 months after it began, the green line in the chart above shows that new build completions are still going backwards across the nation. The Commonwealth needs to invest in infrastructure to address the housing supply crisis. It should use the impact of the war in Iran as an opportunity to do better, not an excuse for giving up on housing supply.

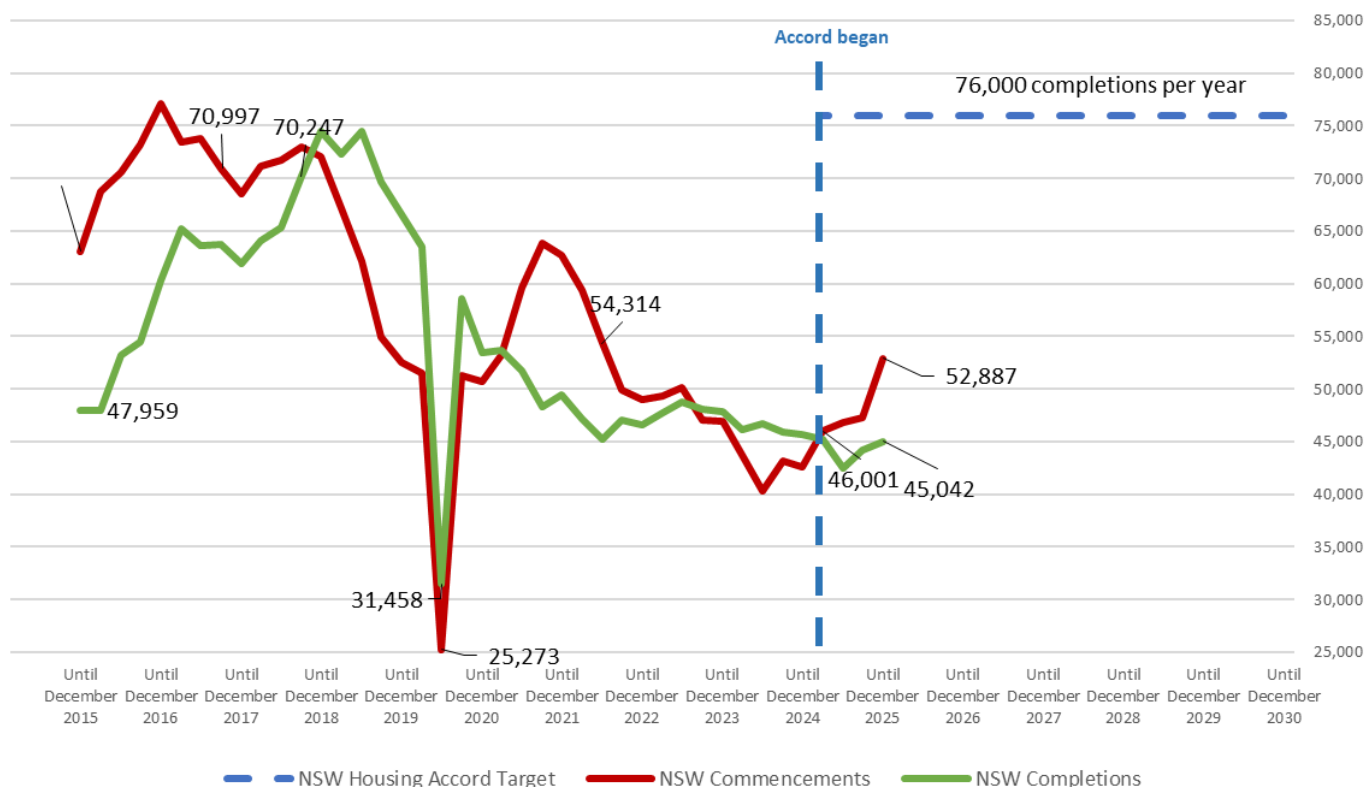
The news in NSW is also one of improvement – but to see that translate into new homes, we must see urgent government action similar to the urgency showed by the former NSW Government at the start of the pandemic in early 2020.

Annualised NSW dwelling commencements by type

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	30,679	22,208	52,887
12 months till end December 2024	20,944	21,653	42,597
12 months till end December 2023	23,891	23,001	46,892
12 months till end December 2022	21,801	27,141	48,942
12 months till end December 2021	30,989	31,699	62,688
12 months till end December 2020	25,443	25,307	50,750
12 months till end December 2019	26,851	25,690	52,541
12 months till end December 2018	41,305	30,827	72,132
12 months till end December 2017	39,935	28,626	68,561
12 months till end December 2016	47,777	29,369	77,146

8752.0 Building Activity, Australia, TABLE 34. Number of Dwelling Unit Commencements by Sector, States and Territories, released 08/04/2026.

NSW dwelling commencements & completions rolling four-quarter chart



Source: 8752.0 Building Activity, Australia. TABLE 34. Number of Dwelling Unit Commencements by Sector, States and Territories & TABLE 34 and TABLE 38 - Release 08/04/2026

Urban Taskforce Australia was already calling for Premier Chris Minns and Treasurer Daniel Mookhey to urgently review the various fees, taxes and other charges placed on new housing supply in order to boost project feasibility.

The war in the Iran threatens to make the housing supply crisis even worse.

Deferring charges like the Housing and Productivity Contribution and local government infrastructure contributions to the time where homes are ready to be occupied will reduce pressure on the financing of projects. If the Government is serious about housing supply, it needs to show this by cutting or deferring the fees, taxes and charges that add so much to the cost of new housing supply.

Equally, the NSW Government needs to consider suspending affordable housing taxes and water infrastructure development charges. This cannot wait until the NSW Budget is handed down in June.

End

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

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

Annualised NSW dwelling completions by type

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	23,584	21,458	45,042
12 months till end December 2024	24,200	21,504	45,704
12 months till end December 2023	20,935	26,929	47,864
12 months till end December 2022	20,427	26,180	46,607
12 months till end December 2021	25,100	24,384	49,484
12 months till end December 2020	30,006	23,442	53,448
12 months till end December 2019	37,830	28,750	66,580
12 months till end December 2018	44,135	30,393	74,528
12 months till end December 2017	33,175	28,692	61,867
12 months till end December 2016	34,911	25,372	60,283

8752.0 Building Activity, Australia, TABLE 38. Number of Dwelling Unit Completions by Sector, States and Territories, released 08/04/2026.

Annualised national dwelling completions by type

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end December 2025	61,840	110,270	172,657
12 months till end December 2024	64,943	111,635	177,818
12 months till end December 2023	60,111	115,235	176,193
12 months till end December 2022	57,825	115,172	173,559
12 months till end December 2021	68,055	109,764	178,983
12 months till end December 2020	76,170	104,424	181,728
12 months till end December 2019	90,869	110,389	202,703
12 months till end December 2018	97,208	120,642	219,474
12 months till end December 2017	99,411	112,769	214,086
12 months till end December 2016	95,522	114,165	212,210

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