

## MEDIA RELEASE

6 May 2026

### **Building Bill - the beginning of the end for ambulance-chasing lawyers**

CEO of Urban Taskforce Australia Tom Forrest today welcomed the Minns Government's latest efforts to remove bad actors from the complex area of building rectification.

An entire industry of "ambulance-chasing lawyers" has recently emerged. These lawyers say that they are pro-consumer, while actually working to stop defect rectification, encouraging owners' corporations to take matters to court for the benefit of no-one except themselves.

This has led to a growing industry of litigation around building defects that:

- drives up costs for owners, builders, developers and insurers;
- prolongs disputes instead of resolving them quickly;
- encourages adversarial claims rather than practical remediation;
- damages confidence in apartment living and higher-density housing;
- adds further risk and cost to housing delivery at a time when NSW desperately needs more homes.

The *Building (Approvals and Practitioners) Bill 2026* gives the Government a head of power under the *Residential Apartment Building (Compliance and Enforcement) Act 2020* (the RAB Act) that will allow it to establish a regulatory framework for a building defect dispute mediation/resolution service through the Building Commission.

Defects should be fixed, not farmed out as business opportunities for unscrupulous law firms. The system should focus on accountability, insurance, certification, and swift remediation — this Bill is an important step in that direction.

Urban Taskforce Australia been at the forefront of calls for the Government to adopt this proven model based on the Queensland Government's building defect dispute mediation model.

In November 2025, the Legislative Council Public Accountability and Works Committee unanimously recommended that this change be incorporated into building legislation:

#### Recommendation 4

That the NSW Government establish a new dispute resolution process for building defects that:

- provides for mandatory mediation
- places a formal stay on proceedings for a fixed period to ensure the limitation period is paused
- for transitional purposes, places a formal stay on proceedings on any legal proceedings already underway
- provides adequate resources and funding to Building Commission NSW to ensure timely and efficient resolution of disputes.

The members of that Committee covered the political spectrum.

#### Committee members

Ms Abigail Boyd MLC	The Greens	Chair
Hon Scott Farlow MLC	Liberal Party	Deputy Chair
Hon Mark Buttigieg MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Dr Sarah Kaine MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Hon Mark Latham MLC	Independent	
Hon Sarah Mitchell, MLC**	The Nationals	
Hon Peter Primrose MLC	Australian Labor Party	
Ms Cate <u>Faehrmann</u> MLC*	The Greens	

The Committee recognised that a mediation model will reduce the cost of defect rectification and ensure that defects are fixed faster. Given the Committee's unanimous support for this proposal, it is hoped that this Bill proceeds through the Parliament with full support.




The suite of reforms contained within the Bill is the next stage in the Government's strategy to speed up housing delivery. In addition to the dispute mediation and resolution service, it provides for:

- streamlining the building approval process by integrating design and building declarations into the building approval process, reducing red tape and administrative burden, and creating a new building approvals framework that provides clearer obligations for the building industry and approval authorities;
- providing clear and simple processes for approval and completion of building work and permitting staged approvals to enable faster commencement of building work and variations approved by approval authorities significantly reducing downtime during construction;
- modernising and removing significant administrative burden for approvals by leveraging digital systems and replacing outdated paper-based processes; and
- supporting uptake of modern and more efficient methods of construction, aiming at speeding up approvals and engendering greater confidence in the community about the opportunities unleashed by technology.

End

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

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