

MEDIA RELEASE

2 June 2026

ABS data on new dwelling approvals spell caution

Urban Taskforce Australia CEO, Tom Forrest, said today that ABS housing data for new dwelling construction approvals across Australia in April 2026 shows a drop of 3.5% in new dwelling approvals from the prior month of March 2026.

The worrying factor here is not the level of the drop off in approvals, which at 3.5% is fairly modest, but more what we expect is coming with the impact of the three interest rate rises and the cost pressures associated with the war in Iran which are yet to be reflected in the numbers.

All the politicians told us that it takes time to turn the planning systems of Australia around – and we were starting to see progress. For that to be dropping off now, even before the impact of rate rises and the war have flowed through to the numbers, spells concern.

National dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 02/06/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
April 2026	6,495	10,215	16,710
March 2026	7,000	10,307	17,307
February 2026	9,097	10,248	19,345
January 2026	4,673	10,054	14,728
December 2025	5,966	9,892	15,858
November 2025	8,849	9,685	18,535
October 2025	6,523	9,608	16,131
September 2025	7,556	9,666	17,221
August 2025	6,104	9,303	15,407
July 2025	6,494	9,673	16,167
June 2025	8,168	9,361	17,529
May 2025	6,028	9,458	15,486
April 2025	5,600	9,567	15,167

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 06. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - Australia, - Released: 02/06/2026

With the National Housing Accord requiring 240,000 completed dwellings each year nationally and 76,000 each year in NSW, we are a long way away from where we need to be.

Nationally, the annualised results are up on the previous 12 months compared to the same time last year (200,424 versus 184,725), with April's results sitting on the average for the year.

While the annualised data for Australia shows an improvement over prior years, it remains well below where we need to be to achieve the Housing Accord completion numbers – particularly when you consider the slow start and the deficit against the target arising from the first 16 months of the Housing Accord (up to end of April 2026).

National annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 02/06/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end April 2026	82,953	117,470	200,424
12 months till end April 2025	71,831	112,893	184,725
12 months till end April 2024	62,198	104,420	166,617
12 months till end April 2023	71,377	110,242	181,618
12 months till end April 2022	78,136	132,442	210,577
12 months till end April 2021	68,944	138,037	206,980
12 months till end April 2020	71,706	104,916	176,627
12 months till end April 2019	81,829	114,782	196,613
12 months till end April 2018	107,951	123,537	231,489
12 months till end April 2017	109,341	116,408	225,751

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 06. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - Australia, - Released: 02/06/2026

In NSW, the picture is more concerning. Approval numbers were down by 9.5%. This, at a time when we hope to see these numbers continuing to rise.

NSW dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 02/06/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
April 2026	2,003	2,027	4,030
March 2026	2,101	2,351	4,452
February 2026	2,145	2,129	4,274
January 2026	2,013	1,948	3,961
December 2025	2,202	1,913	4,115
November 2025	2,809	2,014	4,823
October 2025	1,915	1,958	3,873
September 2025	2,849	1,930	4,779
August 2025	1,863	1,759	3,622
July 2025	2,253	2,124	4,377
June 2025	3,903	1,856	5,759
May 2025	2,446	1,871	4,317
April 2025	2,014	1,989	4,003

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 02/06/2026

Urban Taskforce remains hopeful that the Housing Delivery Authority will see tens of thousands of new dwellings approved in coming months. But even this shining light of NSW planning reform has been dimmed by the recently announced HDA Review and the cut-backs to the areas of operation of the HDA, which will exclude the CBDs of Sydney, North Sydney and Parramatta.

Worse, the Review mandated that Expressions of Interest include a feasibility killing in-perpetuity affordable housing contribution, that at least matches what local council Local Environment Plans require.

The entire point of the HDA was to have EOs that were feasible for construction submitted and then merit assessed in the context of the desperate need for more housing supply. Winding the HDA back is the opposite of what is needed.

The Premier has made his annoyance about these changes known and Urban Taskforce calls upon the Government to reverse those changes that will negatively impact on project feasibility with alacrity.

NSW annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 02/06/2026

	Multi-Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end April 2026	28,502	23,880	52,382
12 months till end April 2025	25,231	22,509	47,740
12 months till end April 2024	23,054	23,207	46,261
12 months till end April 2023	24,329	25,746	50,075
12 months till end April 2022	28,187	30,720	58,907
12 months till end April 2021	26,520	28,874	55,394
12 months till end April 2020	26,151	24,344	50,495
12 months till end April 2019	31,746	29,405	61,151
12 months till end April 2018	41,940	30,624	72,564
12 months till end April 2017	44,985	29,362	74,347

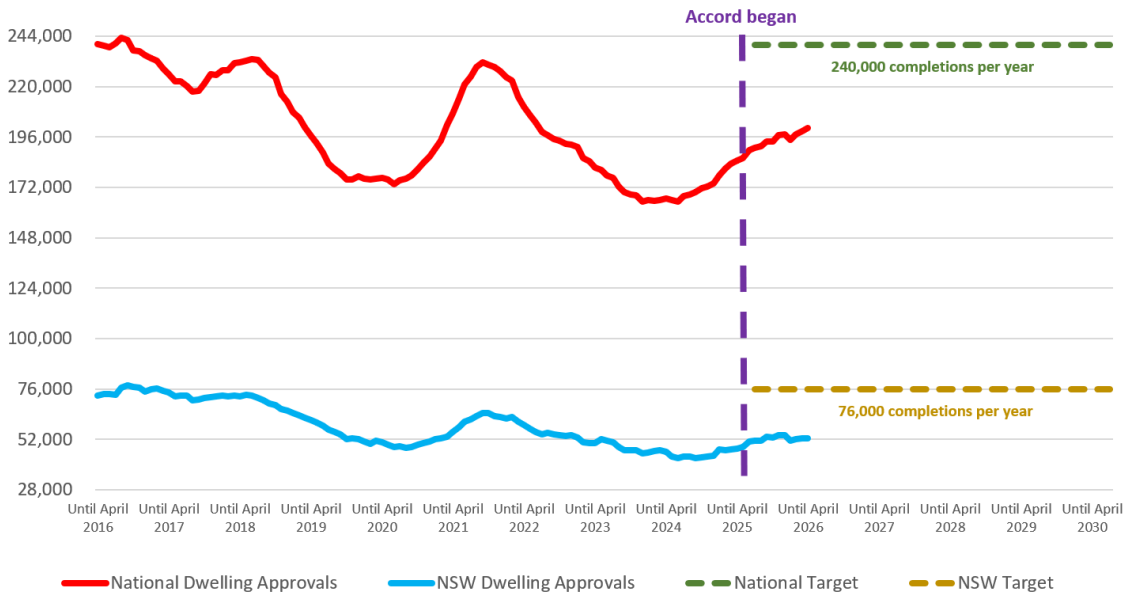
Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South

The 12 months to April 2026 (52,382 approvals) are still considerably higher than the 12 months to April 2025 (47,740), recognising gains made throughout the year, but industry reports suggest that the current economic and political uncertainty will cut deeper over coming months.

The true comparison of planning system performance comes from an analysis of the number of new dwelling approvals per 1,000 population, on an annualised basis. On this measure, NSW is performing poorly.

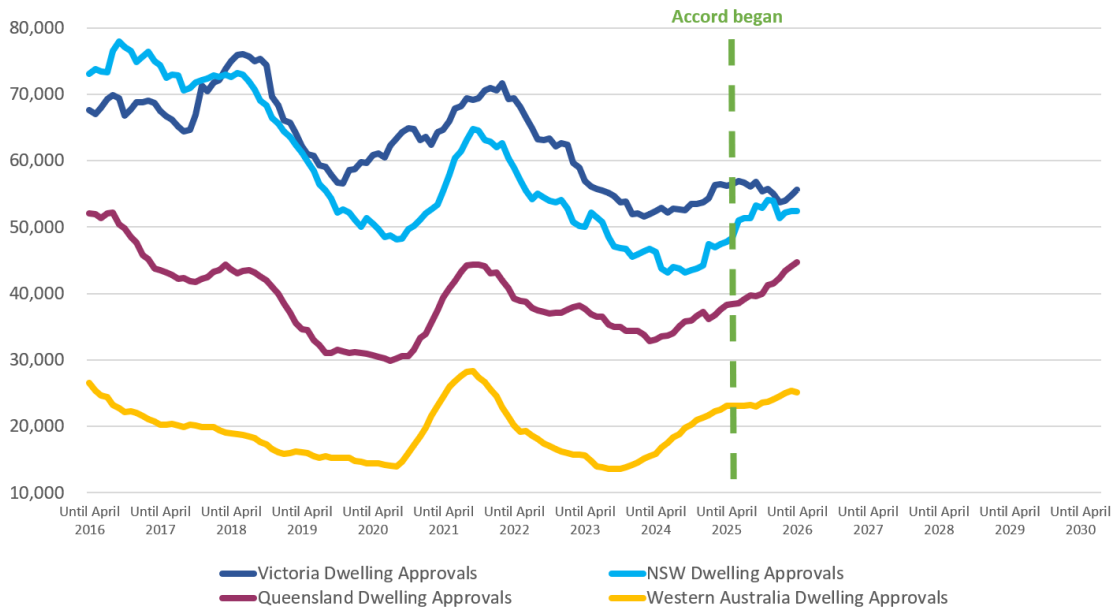
	Approvals - 12 months to April 2026	Population	Approvals per 1,000 head
Australia	200,424	27,724,700	7.2
ACT	4,339	486,231	8.9
Western Australia	25,097	3,061,700	8.2
Queensland	44,689	5,692,600	7.9
Victoria	55,654	7,104,300	7.8
South Australia	14,914	1,908,182	7.8
New South Wales	52,382	8,624,500	6.1
Tasmania	2,548	576,659	4.4
Northern Territory	777	265,457	2.9

12 month dwelling approvals - National v NSW



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 2/06/2026

Dwelling Approvals for prior 12 months by state



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 2/06/2026

End

Note: the ABS data used in the analysis and tables above is the Seasonally Adjusted series.

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

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