

MEDIA RELEASE

1 July 2026

ABS data on new dwelling approvals: consistently under-achieving

Urban Taskforce Australia CEO, Tom Forrest, said today that ABS housing data for new dwelling construction approvals across Australia in May 2026 shows a small decline in May from the data recorded for April 2026. When we are so far behind the targets, we need to improving every month, not going backwards.

However, based on the data over the past 12 months, there is a modest increase in the number of approvals, albeit, well below the numbers required to meet the National Housing Accord targets.

National seasonally adjusted dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 01/07/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
May 2026	6,325	10,694	17,019
April 2026	6,826	10,381	17,207
March 2026	6,839	10,406	17,245
February 2026	9,518	10,299	19,817
January 2026	3,624	10,102	13,725
December 2025	6,045	9,929	15,974
November 2025	9,211	9,693	18,904
October 2025	6,633	9,628	16,261
September 2025	8,573	9,694	18,267
August 2025	6,027	9,287	15,314
July 2025	6,370	9,634	16,003
June 2025	7,520	9,365	16,885
May 2025	6,719	9,447	16,166

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

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

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end May 2026	83,511	119,112	202,621
12 months till end May 2025	72,010	113,158	185,167
12 months till end May 2024	60,223	105,425	165,649
12 months till end May 2023	72,024	108,819	180,843
12 months till end May 2022	78,075	128,273	206,348
12 months till end May 2021	71,743	143,032	214,774
12 months till end May 2020	70,359	105,082	175,441
12 months till end May 2019	79,694	113,624	193,317
12 months till end May 2018	108,525	123,558	232,082
12 months till end May 2017	106,171	116,166	222,339

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

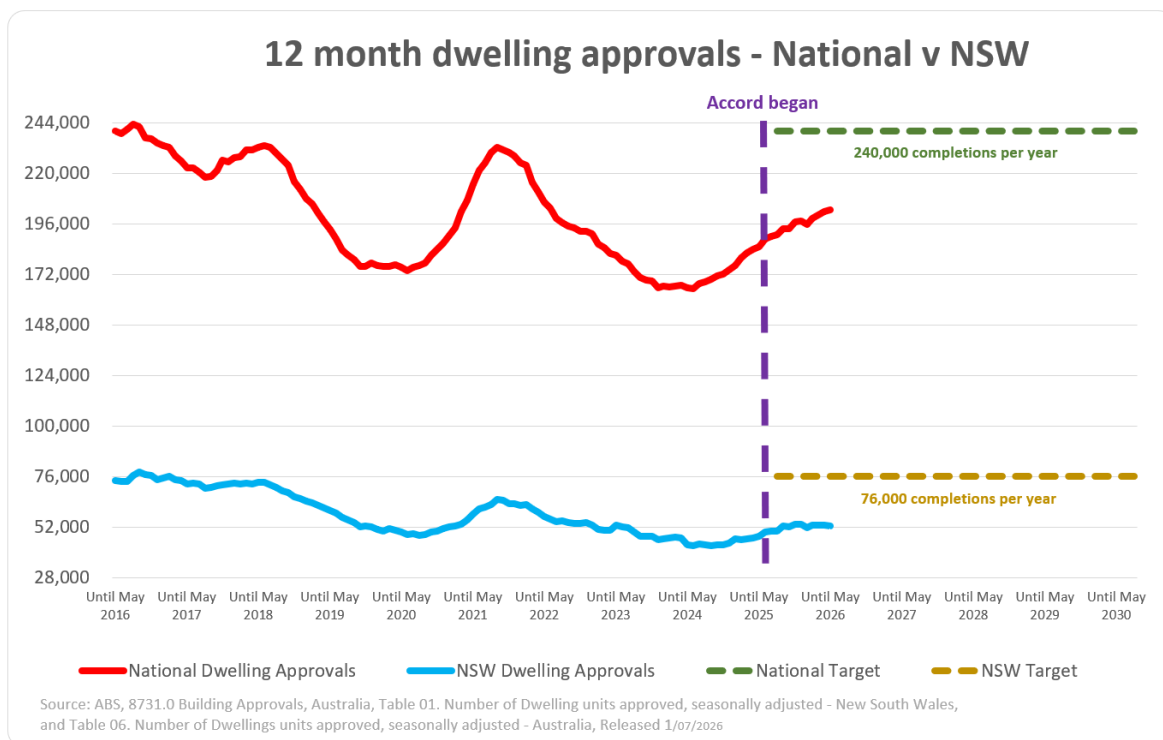
Today is the second anniversary of the start of the National Housing Accord, though today's data reports on progress until the end of May.

The ongoing underperformance on housing supply across the nation reflects the failure of the Commonwealth to drive the states or offer financial incentives to deliver on planning reform. While the states have come through with some big improvements to their planning systems, the Commonwealth has been largely absent from any role in driving reform.

It is only now that the Federal Productivity Commission has been commissioned by Minister O’Neil to review the impact of regulations on housing supply. This is a welcome shift from the Commonwealth, but we are three and a half years from when the National Housing Accord was first announced and two years into the actual Accord period.

With the National Housing Accord requiring 240,000 completed dwellings each year nationally and 76,000 each year in NSW, we are still a long way away from where we need to be. Every month we under-perform means that we need to over-perform in the remaining months to make up the difference.

In NSW, today is also the first day of operation of the new Development Co-ordination Authority (DCA) – a one stop shop for all agency referrals and consents. This is a significant cut through on red tape and planning bureaucracy. It was supported by both sides of politics and if it does what it says on the box, it will be a welcome change to the planning system.



In NSW, the picture remains concerning. While there was a modest increase month on month, NSW is approving only 70% of the dwellings required to be completed each month. There is always a drop off between approvals and building completions, particularly when interest rates go up, so more needs to be done.

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

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
May 2026	2,171	2,294	4,465
April 2026	2,248	2,120	4,368
March 2026	2,014	2,335	4,349
February 2026	2,285	2,144	4,429
January 2026	1,307	1,975	3,282
December 2025	2,562	1,939	4,501
November 2025	3,026	2,011	5,037
October 2025	1,991	1,963	3,954
September 2025	3,726	1,929	5,655
August 2025	1,473	1,737	3,210
July 2025	2,167	2,108	4,275
June 2025	3,229	1,844	5,073
May 2025	2,976	1,851	4,827

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

There is some hope that with the NSW Housing Delivery Authority now in full swing and the Development Co-ordination Authority starting to slash the red tape from today, we will see some improvement and get closer to the targets.

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

	Multi-Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end May 2026	28,199	24,399	52,598
12 months till end May 2025	25,048	22,377	47,425
12 months till end May 2024	20,312	23,356	43,668
12 months till end May 2023	27,457	25,391	52,848
12 months till end May 2022	27,044	30,036	57,080
12 months till end May 2021	28,517	29,634	58,151
12 months till end May 2020	24,979	24,481	49,460
12 months till end May 2019	30,952	28,918	59,870
12 months till end May 2018	42,549	30,681	73,230
12 months till end May 2017	43,095	29,093	72,188

Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector,

Urban Taskforce has started to report on the performance of the planning system based on the population, so a direct comparison between the states can be seen.

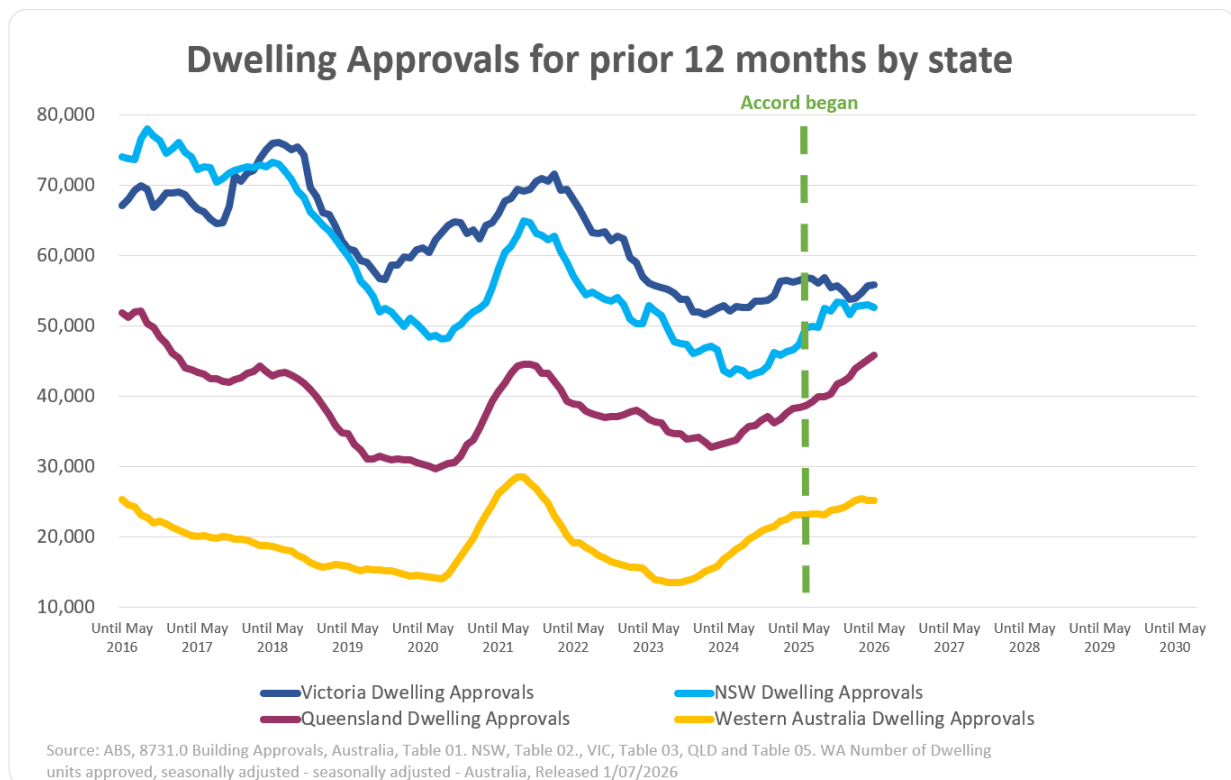
The population data has been updated to show the state by state population as of December 2025.

Based on this new population data and today's ABS approvals data, the table below shows the number of new dwelling approvals per 1,000 population, on an annualised basis. On this measure, NSW continues to perform poorly.

	Approvals - 12 months to May 2026	Population	Approvals per 1,000 head
Australia	202,621	27,801,000	7.3
ACT	4,322	486,231	8.9
Western Australia	25,182	3,076,500	8.2
Queensland	45,806	5,712,100	8.0
Victoria	55,863	7,121,900	7.8
South Australia	15,144	1,910,600	7.9
New South Wales	52,598	8,641,100	6.1
Tasmania	2,587	579,100	4.5
Northern Territory	649	267,500	2.4

Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia July 2026 ; ABS National, state and territory population June 2026

It is clear from the table above and the chart below that NSW, despite having 1.5 million more people, is under-performing compared to Victoria (along with every other mainland state).



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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