

MEDIA RELEASE

9 July 2026

ABS approvals data – A fine grain analysis of LGA performance

Tom Forrest, CEO of the Urban Taskforce, said that yesterday's ABS statistics on local government approvals are showing that too many councils continue to drag their heels when it comes to development approvals. **But the performance of North Sydney Council must be called out. They should have their planning powers taken from them. Their performance is a disgrace.**

Councils in the East and North of Sydney are particularly failing to deliver the approvals needed to meet the State's National Housing Accord targets.

WORST PERFORMING - SYDNEY METRO		Dwellings approved - May, 2026	Target to FY29	Pro-rata completion target to May, 2026	Approvals so far during Housing Accord
Worst	Strathfield	5	3,500	1,342	298
2nd worst	Willoughby	9	3,400	1,303	389
3rd worst	North Sydney	-	5,900	2,262	724
4	Waverley	34	2,400	920	323
5	Ku-ring-gai	30	7,600	2,913	1,026
6	Hornsby	25	5,500	2,108	784
7	Hunters Hill	2	400	153	59
8	Lane Cove	4	3,400	1,303	552
9	Randwick	24	4,000	1,533	680
10	Woollahra	5	1,900	728	329

The stand-out candidate for the wooden spoon continues to be **Strathfield**, which has approved developments covering just 22.2% of its Housing Accord completions target to date. One thing's for certain – there will be no completions without DA approvals!

Willoughby (29.8% of their pro-rata completions target) and **North Sydney** (32.0%) make up the bottom three.

North Sydney Council had no approvals in May. None. Not one.

North Sydney Council is the only council from Port Stephens to Shoalhaven; from Waverley to Blue Mountains not to approve any dwellings in the month of May.

It is high time their planning powers were taken from them and handed over to the Central Sydney Planning Committee (CSPC).

At the other end of the spectrum, **Hawkesbury** (152.1%), **Canada Bay** (141.9%), and **Blue Mountains** (100.0%) top the table, continuing to push past their targets.

Blue Mountains, albeit with a low target, have achieved 17 approvals in the month of May. Even the Blue Mountains Council has outperformed Strathfield, Willoughby, and North Sydney combined – quite the feat.

While we are all struggling with making the feasibility of housing development projects stack up, it does not help when Councils are dragging their heels and working against the interests of young people, renters, down-sizers, and new home buyers.

The poor performance of far too many Sydney Councils is making it more and more likely that NSW will miss its Accord targets, exacerbating the housing supply crisis and further eroding housing affordability.

BEST PERFORMING - SYDNEY METRO		Dwellings approved - May, 2026	Target to FY29	Pro-rata completion target to May, 2026	Approvals so far during Housing Accord
Best	Hawkesbury	41	1,300	498	758
2	Canada Bay	32	5,000	1,917	2,719
3	Blue Mountains	17	600	230	230
4	Burwood	8	3,300	1,265	1,189
5	Wollondilly	198	5,500	2,108	1,866
6	Sutherland	92	6,000	2,300	1,988
7	Camden	136	10,200	3,910	3,188
8	Fairfield	119	5,900	2,262	1,803
9	Parramatta	68	19,500	7,475	5,848
10	Penrith	70	8,400	3,220	2,389

Elsewhere, the major regions of Greater Newcastle, Central Coast and Illawarra-Shoalhaven continue to perform comparatively well, although **Newcastle City Council** is giving some of the worst-performing metro councils a run for their money on percentages.

With that said, it still managed to approve more dwellings than any single council in the bottom 10.

Maitland Council approved more homes than the bottom 10 combined.

NEWCASTLE, CENTRAL COAST, ILLAWARRA		Dwellings approved - May, 2026	Target to FY29	Pro-rata completion target to May, 2026	Approvals so far during Housing Accord
1	Maitland	172	5,300	2,032	2,464
2	Port Stephens	89	2,100	805	962
3	Cessnock	68	3,900	1,495	1,615
4	Shellharbour	71	3,800	1,457	1,286
5	Wollongong	94	9,200	3,527	3,029
6	Shoalhaven	61	4,900	1,878	1,532
7	Lake Macquarie	123	8,000	3,067	2,403
8	Kiama	32	900	345	225
9	Central Coast	82	9,400	3,603	2,341
10	Newcastle	44	11,100	4,255	1,658

Other regions are also delivering strongly, with Port Macquarie (1,065) having approved more dwellings than any of the bottom 10 Sydney councils.

These LGAs are showing what can be achieved, if councils facilitate, rather than frustrate, housing supply. If those who are underperforming don't pick up the slack soon, we'll never hit our National Housing Accord targets.

	BEST PERFORMING - OTHER REGIONAL (numbers only)	Dwellings approved - May, 2026	Target to FY29	Pro-rata completion target to May, 2026	Approvals so far during Housing Accord
1	Port Macquarie-Hastings	44			1,065
2	Mid-Coast	32			996
	Queanbeyan-Palerang				
3	Regional	31			920
4	Dubbo Regional	19			865
5	Wagga Wagga	38			767
6	Tamworth Regional	42			732
7	Albury	49			698
8	Clarence Valley	38			690
9	Coffs Harbour	33			665
10	Tweed	23			600

End

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

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