

MEDIA RELEASE

30 September 2026

ABS housing approvals starting to reflect ongoing challenges

Urban Taskforce Australia CEO, Tom Forrest, said today that ABS approvals data is starting to show the impacts of a downturn in market conditions, posting a poorer result for August than for the previous 2 months.

NSW seasonally adjusted dwelling approvals - previous 13 months - ABS Release: 30/09/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
August 2026	1,725	2,171	3,896
July 2026	2,441	2,272	4,713
June 2026	2,688	2,273	4,961
May 2026	2,176	2,296	4,472
April 2026	2,303	2,112	4,415
March 2026	1,970	2,353	4,323
February 2026	2,275	2,152	4,427
January 2026	1,335	1,958	3,293
December 2025	2,501	1,939	4,440
November 2025	3,028	2,019	5,047
October 2025	2,024	1,969	3,993
September 2025	3,619	1,926	5,545
August 2025	1,489	1,787	3,276

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01 Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 30/09/2026

2026 has been a shocker for the housing supply sector. We have had 4 interest rate rises and an extended war in the Gulf. We had an awful Federal Budget which shattered investor confidence. Productivity rates are catastrophic and the Commonwealth has all but run out of others to blame.

Nationally, the statistics show a significant month on month (July 2026 to August 2026) drop in new dwelling approvals of 6.1%. Queensland (-22.5%) had the biggest decline followed up by NSW (-17.3%).

On a year-on-year basis, the new dwelling approval results saw improvement on the basis of the high growth period prior to the first interest rate increase in February this year.

Nationally, in the 12 months up to the end of August 2026, there were 208,181 new dwelling approvals. This was an increase over the prior year of 9.1% when there were only 190,753 approvals.

In NSW, the 12 months till the end of August 2026 saw 53,525 dwellings approvals, also up 7.2% on the previous 12 months.

National seasonally adjusted annualised dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 30/09/2026

	Multi Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end August 2026	84,327	123,853	208,181
12 months till end August 2025	77,651	113,103	190,753
12 months till end August 2024	59,877	108,606	168,482
12 months till end August 2023	68,653	104,435	173,086
12 months till end August 2022	75,742	120,876	196,615
12 months till end August 2021	77,016	152,543	229,558
12 months till end August 2020	69,677	106,301	175,982
12 months till end August 2019	71,477	109,365	180,841
12 months till end August 2018	106,210	123,376	229,585
12 months till end August 2017	100,251	117,569	217,820

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 06. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - Australia, - Released: 30/09/2026

NSW annualised seasonally adjusted dwelling approvals - ABS Release: 30/09/2026

	Multi-Unit Dwellings	Houses	Total
12 months till end August 2026	28,085	25,440	53,525
12 months till end August 2025	27,359	22,550	49,909
12 months till end August 2024	20,459	23,230	43,689
12 months till end August 2023	25,383	24,109	49,492
12 months till end August 2022	26,217	28,624	54,841
12 months till end August 2021	31,265	31,547	62,812
12 months till end August 2020	23,716	24,446	48,162
12 months till end August 2019	27,520	27,921	55,441
12 months till end August 2018	40,345	30,487	70,832
12 months till end August 2017	40,873	29,566	70,439

ABS, 87310 Building Approvals, Australia, Table 01. Number of dwelling units approved, by sector, all series - New South Wales, - Released: 30/09/2026

NSW has seen a decline in approvals in each of the last 2 months and the full impact of the interest rate rises and the war in the Gulf has yet to flow through to the data. On the other hand, the HDA has created a significant boost in the pipeline of applications under assessment, and this should see a boost in the approval numbers to come, but it looks like coming too late for the Housing Accord. Time will tell.

The fact is, both across Australia and in NSW, we are still well below where we need to be.

Even if the number of approvals is double that achieved in August 2026, and that extraordinary rate were to be maintained each and every month from now till mid 2028 (assuming a minimum construction period of 12 months, and much longer for high rise developments) it is unlikely the Accord targets will be met.

The big question now is how close can we get and what more can be done?

The Minns Government has endeavoured to improve conditions to support new housing supply through the Housing Delivery Authority and the Low and Mid-rise housing pathways. They have also passed significant reforms through the NSW Parliament (with bi-partisan support), but still, they face strong resistance from NIMBY Councils.

The blatant posturing by Woollahra Council against the State led rezonings based on the completion of a new heavy rail station at Woollahra cannot be tolerated. Similarly, the take-no-prisoners, anti housing campaign from Mosman Council against the State's Low and Mid-Rise Housing reforms require a strong and consistent hand from Minister Scully and Secretary of DPHI, Kiersten Fishburn, lest momentum in this space be lost.

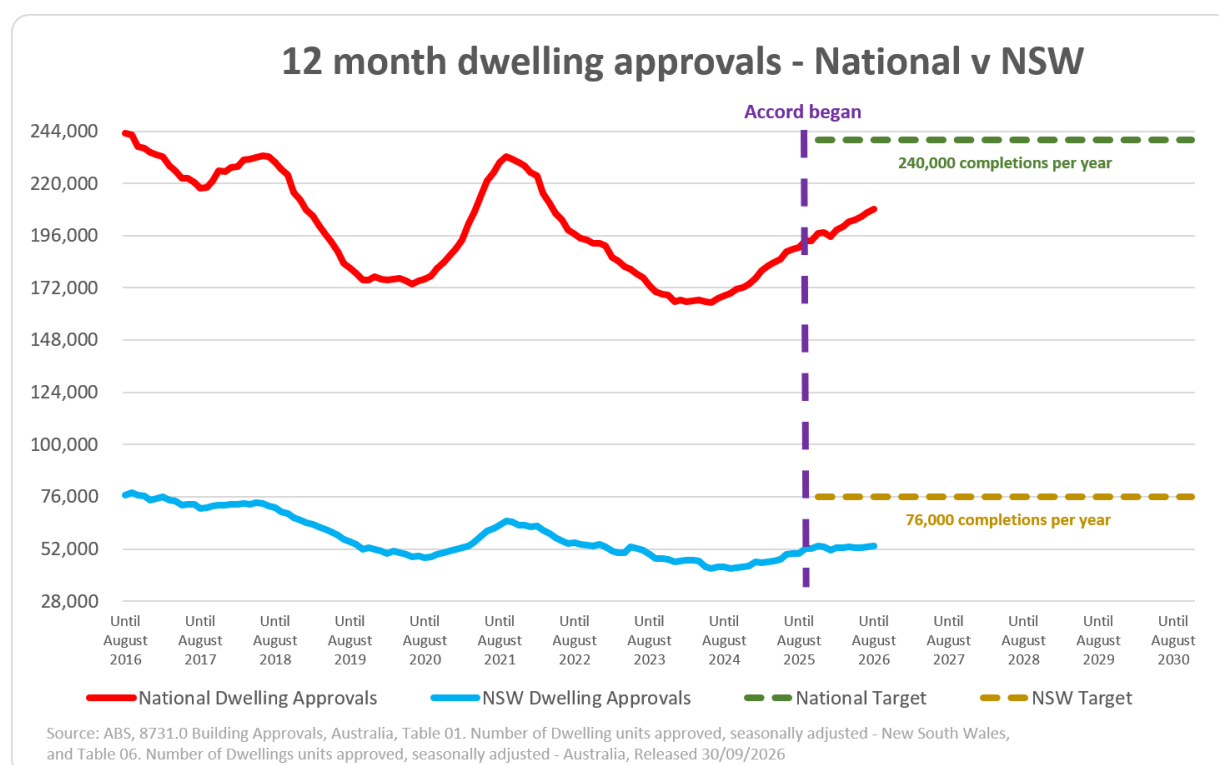
	Approvals - 12 months to August 2026	Population	Approvals per 1,000 head
Australia	208,181	27,801,000	7.5
Western Australia	26,695	3,076,500	8.7
Queensland	47,500	5,712,100	8.3
South Australia	15,874	1,910,600	8.3
Victoria	57,105	7,121,900	8.0
ACT	3,750	486,231	7.7
New South Wales	53,525	8,641,100	6.2
Tasmania	2,821	579,100	4.9
Northern Territory	866	267,500	3.2

Source: ABS Building Approvals, Australia 30 September 2026; ABS National, state and territory population June 2026

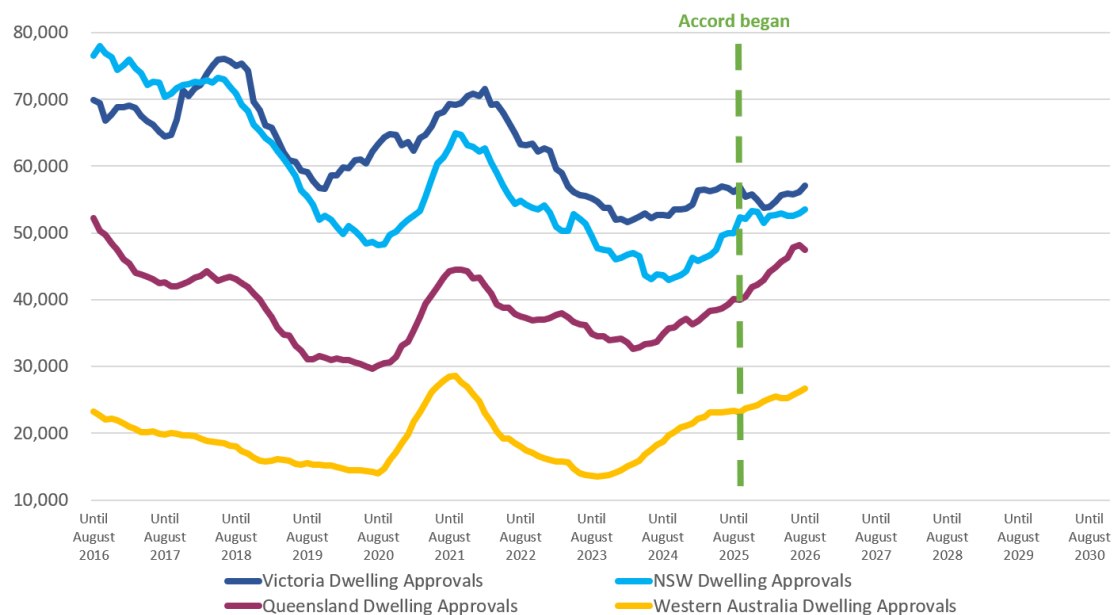
Today's results should be seen as a shot across the bow – the monthly results are bad, but the annual numbers are positive. Australian governments have an opportunity to turn fortunes around in the pursuit of their National Housing Accord goals.

In NSW we've got a long way to go. On a per head of population basis, we're still running well behind most of the rest of the country, with a mere 6.2 approvals per 1,000 people. WA is approving 8.7 dwellings per 1,000.

And with a significant drop-off between approval and completion, that means that we need to be aiming for many more approvals than we currently get just to achieve the required completions targets.



Dwelling Approvals for prior 12 months by state



End

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

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

Media Enquires: Tom Forrest, Chief Executive Officer: 0429 460 863

Follow us: [in](#) [@](#) [f](#)

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