

Premier needs to take a stronger role with housing supply during the transition to merged councils

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The Premier, Gladys Berejiklian's reason for continuing with Sydney council mergers is to increase housing supply but approvals are dropping partly due to the confusion of the merger process, says the Urban Taskforce.

"The NSW Government decision to continue with council mergers will be good in the longer term for more effective planning processes but the transition phase is likely to slow down housing approvals," says Urban Taskforce CEO, Chris Johnson. "The Premier has stated the advantage of council mergers is to increase housing supply and improve planning but over the next two years the amalgamation process is likely to make planning more complex."

"The Government must take a stronger role in driving housing supply during the transition to larger more efficient councils by unlocking large housing projects caught up in the planning system. The Urban Taskforce is aware of over 30 large housing projects caught up in the planning process that could be turned into real projects. Some of these projects have holding costs of hundreds of thousands of dollars a month."

"The continuation of the merger process needs to be accompanied by a fast track approach to large housing projects during the transition process. The Minister for Housing, Anthony Roberts, should establish an action team under a Commissioner for Housing Supply for a two year period to lift housing approvals."

"While the increase in housing completions to 33,000 for Greater Sydney is good news this needs to be balanced by falling housing approvals. The Australian Bureau of Statistics data shows the housing approvals in NSW dropped by 25% between July and December 2016."

"The Urban Taskforce is keen to work with Housing Minister Anthony Roberts to suggest ways to increase housing supply and housing affordability."

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

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