

HOUSING NOW! ADVOCACY CAMPAIGN

BUSINESS NSW

SUPPORTING



The housing crisis presents a policy challenge of extraordinary urgency, and demands bold political, community and industry leadership.

Clear the backlog

We have some of the solutions to our housing crisis already in our system. We need Government intervention to make sure they are approved.

- ***Decrease the number of Development Applications being determined by Councillors , rather than by Council officers under delegation*** – With increases to construction costs and growing communities' current thresholds for Development Applications seems to be outdated. We ask the State Government to provide Local Government minimum requirements for both the value of developments being assessed and the number of submissions received based on percentage of the population.
- ***Build Skills Capacity Locally*** – Provide subsidised training pathways to encourage people to train in this in-demand field. Incentivise regional universities to provide Planning Courses to increase the number of graduates.
- ***Increase the scope of the Regional Housing Flying Squad*** – Increase the scope of the Regional Housing Flying Squad to support Council's in various support roles in determining a development application and acts as an escalation panel for developments that have exceeded 60 days.
- ***Provide assessment timeframes for the approval/consent of external referrals and concurrent consents*** – Timeframes for development are significantly impacted by the delay in response from referral authorities, which is required as part of the assessment process. Enforce timeframes on all State agencies to comply with approval timeframes.

Enabling infrastructure and incentivising investment

The opportunity for growth across the region is only inhibited by the costs of providing infrastructure to service it, with the cost being inequitable to our metro counterparts.

- **Incentivise growth by funding infrastructure in growth corridors** – Enable new development in our regions by funding strategic and structural planning as well as infrastructure in identified growth corridors.
- **Provide access to affordable funding programs to assist local government fund enabling infrastructure** - Provide Local Government with access to low-cost or no-cost funding, or grants, to upgrade existing or invest in new infrastructure that enable housing development.
- **Incentivise commencement of construction** – We acknowledge there are a number of developments that could contribute to the housing landscape in regional areas which are challenged by barriers such as finance and cashflow.
- **Invest in an energy network to support growth** – The investment required by developers to augment the energy network for new and intensifying development is a barrier. Consider adopting a framework similar to other states in that the energy provider upgrades the network and recovers costs through consumption and network charges applied to all users.
- ***Adopt a special Activation Precinct Model for Housing*** – Take the Special Activation Precinct model and replicate this to key housing districts across the Riverina Murray

Diversifying regional housing stock

Local Government have developed a range of strategies that aim to diversify housing by intensifying CBDs, shop-top housing, and minimisation of lot sizes in green-fill sites, however, there have been barriers in these opportunities reaching fruition.

- ***Make Shop-top Housing Complying Development*** - *Complying Development Pathways for shop-top housing. This will not only provide immediate solutions to the diversity of our current housing landscape, it will also contribute to the vibrancy of our CBDs.*
- ***Require larger subdivision's to include a mix of higher density lots*** - *We need to address the changing make up of our community, which includes an ageing population, increasing single person occupancy and a growing homelessness rate. We need housing that reflects community need.*

Housing affordability

While “affordable housing” is a term used frequently when we discuss the housing issues our region faces, we believe that on a regional level, the question of affordability in general has become an issue. With pressures from a building and construction market that have faced both high inflation and demand over the past couple of years, on top of cost-of-doing-business measures and wage pressures, we have seen costs escalate.

- ***Advocate for Regional targets for the Housing Australia Future Fund*** – We encourage the State Government to advocate for fair and equitable targets for the Riverina Murray.

Planning system reform

We need a system that provides developers with certainty and commercial viability.

The costs incurred in developments that require additional time, studies, and work to be submitted, all need to be recovered by developers, and does increase the risk of developments not being realised.

- ***Provide an Assessment Pathway*** – Take the Planning model similar to that of Greater Sydney that can assist Council to determine applications including, those over identified values, developments with a high number of complaints or contentious, act as an escalation point if a Development Application has not been assessed within 60 days.

Technology and innovation

With quick responses required to ensure that we address the current housing crisis, we need new and more innovative ways to address the issue.

- ***Support the Prefabricated Housing Industry to meet its full potential*** – Within our region, there are opportunities to look at new models of housing including prefabricated models. We would encourage the State Government to look to the Queensland model and urge them to invest; if not directly, by way of commitment to production outputs of a minimum number of housing units.
- ***Create a Housing Fund*** – Create a fund to alleviate the barriers to accessing finance associated with prefabricated models. Although there are examples of banks such as Bank West, who are funding prefabricated buildings now, this does not seem to be available for NSW customers. Housing funds could fund the construction cycle of prefabrication with interest.

Accommodating a temporary workforce

This is a large opportunity for the Riverina Murray in terms of investment, if the situation is well managed and responded to quickly.

- ***Review Fringe Benefit Tax on worker accommodation*** – Advocate for FBT exemption for the Riverina Murray. With pipelines of major projects coming to the region and demand for housing and accommodation at an all-time high we need to ensure that we have systems that encourage the right behaviours and not placing workers in “remote” areas without the social infrastructure to support them. We would like to see investment in housing in key growth areas which will add to current supply and diversity of stock in a sustainable way with community wellbeing at heart.
- ***Commence the Pilot Project for Cooma*** – This involves repurposing underutilised travelling stock reserves with 200 lots. This is a shovel ready project that could be replicated throughout the state.
- ***Incentivise Development of Worker Accommodation that can be repurposed*** – As an example, the investment into prefabricated housing that can be repurposed by moving to new locations for new projects or become affordable housing or assets to the aged care industries.

Design pattern book

In the past, metro have used sets of pre-approved designs to help with the development of cities. Metro is certainly looking at how this can assist not only with development, but infill as well.

- ***Create a Regional Design Pattern Book*** – Develop a Regional Design Playbook acknowledging the differences between metro, regional cities, and rural communities.
- ***Increase the scope of Complying Development*** – Provide more complying development options for housing reviewing at a regional level what is currently triggering simple housing application to be pushed through the DA process (ie set backs). Move developments such as shop-top housing to complying development.

Thank you

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