

# Housing needs good planning or it's just a plan to fail

**Paul Nicolaou**



**T**here's a problem when governments, state and federal, announce ambitious housing targets to deal with the pressing housing supply crisis in Sydney and elsewhere.

The implication often seems to be that the governments will do the building when in fact they don't have the wherewithal or the resources to build thousands of homes.

Business Sydney has always believed the private sector holds the key to achieving grand housing targets because fundamentally it is the engine room for construction of all kinds.

The reality is that governments can provide the platform for increased construction using their planning powers and other regulatory levers to make it possible for the private sector to get on with the job of building new homes and many more of them.

The trouble is there are currently relatively few examples where government and the private sector are combining to achieve this result.

But every now and again we get an example which is a template for what

could happen across the length and breadth of our wonderful city.

Premier Chris Minns, Planning Minister Paul Scully and Housing Now! are on the same page in making pattern housing solutions relevant to current needs.

This effective combination of local government and the private sector is also being played out at Meadowbank in Sydney with the start of a project to deliver 291 build-to-rent housing units along with an attractive retail hub.

This development, spearheaded by Ryde Council and apt.Residential, should come as music to the ears of people wanting affordable housing.

I'm thinking here in particular of

essential workers who can't afford to live close to where they work in Sydney.

Nearly two-thirds of the Meadowbank development will be studios or one bedroom options.

The build-to-rent developer and property manager is creating a \$280m mixed-use precinct aimed squarely at the affordable housing market.

Ryde Council and apt.Residential have provided a template that could be replicated across other parts of Sydney.

It's a template that could also be influential with the renewed focus on the redevelopment of Parramatta Rd to deliver thousands of additional housing units.

To replicate the Meadowbank template, government and council authorities must use their planning powers to free up areas that are ripe for development and allow the private sector to get on with the job.

But it is important that governments at all levels acknowledge that ambitious housing targets can only be achieved by working cooperatively with the private sector.

There is no use pretending that they will do the building because they simply can't do it without effective partnerships.

**Paul Nicolaou is executive director of Business Sydney**