

PLANNING REFORMS TO DO HOUSING DENSITY WELL

Joint commitment to a legacy from housing density around stations

The Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) and Shelter NSW support reforms to increase housing density and leave a legacy of more affordable homes and more liveable communities.

PIA NSW President Sharon Smith said *“We need more homes so we can have more choices. PIA propose planning reforms to build more inclusive communities that benefit from density done well”*.

Shelter NSW CEO John Engeler said *“We need to create urban centres that people love; new and better places for existing residents and new community members from all walks of life.”*

It is vital that the next wave of Sydney’s housing growth around stations is accompanied by commitments to boost social and affordable housing and improve access to jobs and amenities. Some station precincts already have capacity for higher density - others require deep collaborations, planning and investment to improve living conditions, respond to a heating climate and to retain low and moderate income households in the area.

Sharon Smith noted *“With the race about to begin on widespread redevelopment around transit stations, now is a good time to ask what we will be left with when the dust settles?”*

Each station precinct is different and has unique opportunities. We support reforms that help deliver collaborative Master Plans that manage the cumulative impacts of density and invest in a more socially and environmentally sustainable communities.

John Engeler, noted that *“We can break the cycle of density proposals leading to a community backlash with an integrated reform package based on achieving results for more inclusive renewal. Communities want to be assured that what is being proposed is better than what they have now.”*

An integrated reform package should include a State Planning Policy which streamlines development assessment where there is capacity near stations for growth or a commitment to build capacity by creating opportunities for inclusive renewal.

Planning reform is only part of the solution for better housing density. Stronger state and local partnerships should agree outcomes using Master Plans and set a path towards investment in enabling infrastructure and services. State Government land agencies will need to strengthen their capacity to unlock difficult development sites and to leverage Government lands for social and affordable housing.

PIA and Shelter noted *“NSW’s housing affordability challenges provide an opportunity to strengthen our planning system and rebalance growth to places where there are jobs and good transport. “The legacy can be ‘good growth’ with the infrastructure matched to higher density and more affordable housing.”* agreed the PIA President and Shelter NSW CEO.

Sharon Smith RPIA (Fellow)
PIA NSW President

John Engeler
CEO Shelter NSW

Joint support for a Station Precinct SEPP and enabling reforms

PIA and Shelter NSW support specific reforms to promote housing growth and build inclusive communities around stations:

1. Improve planning to enable denser and more diverse housing in well-located areas

- Transit Oriented Development SEPP – for streamlined assessment where risks are managed, to support more housing in areas with high transport accessibility.
- Higher targets for housing – for more diverse, social and affordable housing in accessible areas with infrastructure and jobs
- Reset strategic plans – to identify well-located precincts for medium and high density homes
- Smooth pathways for social and affordable housing delivery

2. Better infrastructure planning and delivery partnerships

- Set infrastructure priorities to support density – agency priorities and coordination
- Create Precinct Infrastructure delivery partnerships – mobilizing State, Commonwealth and Local Government resources to ensure infrastructure for growth in strategic precincts
- Housing Productivity Contributions towards a schedule of infrastructure which enables growth and improving amenity in strategic precincts

3. New authorities tasked with delivering density well

- An agency to facilitate Government land development and leverage social and affordable housing opportunities
- An agency to facilitate precinct master-planning and reduce barriers to site amalgamation

These reforms are important because they will help address the significant housing challenges in NSW, including:

- Essential workers in New South Wales such as teachers and nurses are being priced out of housing in suburbs near their workplaces and are facing longer commutes. Research by the University of Sydney shows that the number of essential workers living within 15kms of the Sydney CBD is declining, and there are now no Local Government Areas (LGAs) across Sydney or Melbourne with a median house price that is affordable to an early career essential worker.¹
- NSW Productivity Commission analysis shows that the costs of enabling more housing in well-located areas near existing jobs and infrastructure are "substantially lower" than elsewhere.² However, these figures do not take into account the variable standards of amenity of different places in existing areas.
- There is strong public support for homes to be built in existing urban areas (such as new apartments), with 43% of respondents to a recent Resolve Political Monitor survey expressing strong support or support for these policy solution (compared to just 15% against).³

¹ [Essential workers face ever greater challenges - The University of Sydney](#)

² [Building more homes where people want to live \(nsw.gov.au\)](#)

³ [Australian housing out of reach for young, middle-income earners: RPM data \(smh.com.au\)](#)