

July 2021

Regional Housing Taskforce

This document answers frequently asked questions about the creation and operation of the Regional Housing Taskforce.

Why was the Regional Housing Taskforce created?

- The NSW Government wants to ensure that all residents have a safe space to call home, no matter where in the state they live.
- The way we live, and work is changing. Strong regional economies mean more people are choosing to stay in the regions because they can work close to where they live.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is also causing a shift in people swapping cities for a sea or tree change by moving to the regions.
- These factors are putting pressure on the supply and affordability of homes in the bush and on the coast. House prices have jumped by 16 per cent in regional NSW over the 12 months to April 2021.
- The Minister for Planning and Public Spaces Rob Stokes announced the Regional Housing Taskforce in June 2021 to investigate planning barriers to housing supply in the regions and provide independent advice on ways to deliver more housing.

What does the Regional Housing Taskforce want to achieve?

- The taskforce will focus on four housing issues: supply, affordability, diversity, and resilience.
- The Regional Housing Taskforce aims to:
 - identify and resolve barriers in the planning system to housing supply and affordability
 - provide recommendations on ways to speed up the delivery of new homes in regional NSW
 - find ways to unlock land and encourage the building of new houses.

How will the Regional Housing Taskforce achieve these goals?

- The taskforce builds on recent work by the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Department of Regional NSW.
- During July and August 2021 the taskforce will consult widely with councils, the housing and development sectors, not-for-profit providers and community groups.
- The taskforce will review and analyse all feedback in the preparation of two reports to Minister Stokes:
 - Report 1 - includes evidence and findings from the consultation.
 - Report 2 - includes final recommendations.
- The NSW Government will decide which recommendations to put in place based on the information provided in these reports.

Who is on the Regional Housing Taskforce?

- Garry Fielding has been appointed as Chairperson to lead the taskforce.
- Based in Newcastle, Mr Fielding is a qualified town planner with more than 40 years' experience in State and local government and the private sector.
- He has worked at senior executive levels with the NSW Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and also as head planner with Newcastle, Woollahra and Maitland Councils.
- Mr Fielding is a Life Fellow and former NSW President of the Planning Institute of Australia.
- He is the State-appointed Chair of the Western Regional Planning Panel and recently retired from development and planning group City Plan.
- The taskforce also includes NSW Government executives with expertise in planning, development, and housing. This includes staff from the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment. As well as the Department of Regional NSW.

Who can provide feedback?

- Anyone who wishes to.

How can I have my say?

- Have your say or find more information at planningportal.nsw.gov.au/regional-housing
- Written submissions can be made up until 11.59pm on 27 August 2021.
- The taskforce will also conduct a series of meetings with stakeholders and community groups throughout **July and August 2021**.

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