

July 2021

Background

In addition to the challenges faced by Australian housing markets nationally, regional NSW faces unique housing challenges, linked to diverse economic, environmental and social pressures, and a complex policy context. Changes in migration patterns and housing preferences resulting from COVID-19, growing unaffordability, low rental vacancy rates and mismatches between supply and demand are increasingly placing pressure on regional communities.

The Regional Housing Taskforce (the Taskforce) was formally announced in June 2021 by the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces to identify challenges in the planning system that are preventing the delivery of housing supply and formulate recommendations to improve housing outcomes in regional NSW. The Taskforce is to focus on the technical planning barriers that prevent new housing being delivered within the strategic context of the work being undertaken under the NSW Housing Strategy.

Purpose

The purpose of the Taskforce is:

- To undertake consultation with local government and experts from the development and housing sectors to identify barriers in the planning system to new supply and develop potential solutions
- To advise the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces on the findings of the consultation and research and recommendations to achieve better housing outcomes for regional NSW through the planning system
- To contribute to the evidence base identifying housing challenges and planning barriers to housing delivery, building on existing background work to inform future government housing initiatives and provide advice to the Housing Expert Advisory Panel, when established

The Taskforce will utilise a collaborative approach between agencies, drawing on the expertise and statutory powers of each agency.

Scope

In consultation with relevant experts and stakeholders, the Taskforce will investigate planning barriers and develop recommendations to address regional housing issues with a focus on:

- The planning system and other government levers to stimulate housing supply and address housing needs
- Removing impediments within the planning system to the delivery of affordable housing types and housing generally
- Identifying mechanisms within the planning system to facilitate and drive the delivery of housing matched to community needs

Timeframe and deliverables

The Taskforce is to submit a report outlining its findings into the investigation of planning barriers to regional housing delivery to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces in September 2021,

followed by a second report with recommendations to address identified barriers to delivery of regional housing in October 2021.

Following delivery of the reports, the Taskforce will cease to operate unless the purpose and scope of the Taskforce is revised or expanded in consultation with, or as requested by, the Minister.

Membership

The Taskforce is led by the Chair, Garry Fielding. The Chair is responsible for convening meetings and setting the agenda for each meeting in consultation with the other members of the Taskforce. The Chair is also responsible for preparing the reports to the Minister for Planning and Public Spaces.

Senior representatives from relevant NSW Government agencies including the Department of Planning, Industry and Environment and the Department of Regional NSW (DRNSW) comprise the other members of the Taskforce.

The meetings of the Taskforce may also be attended by non-members, to be determined by way of invitation from the Chair.

External Engagement

A series of meetings will be scheduled in key locations across regional NSW to allow for key stakeholders such as local government, industry and the community to inform the Taskforce's deliberation and consideration of recommendations.

A call for submissions will be made to inform the recommendations to Government about changes to the planning system that will assist to deliver appropriate housing in regional NSW. The Taskforce will consider written submissions made up until 27th August 2021.