



MEDIA RELEASE

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HOME TRUTHS LAID BARE IN COAG REPORT

The need for community and industry buy-in to strategic plans for our cities is a finding applauded by Australia's urban development industry.

COAG's *Review of Capital City Strategic Planning Systems* highlights key goals for government to ensure visions for our cities' future are backed up by extensive consultation in the creation of strategic plans, evidence-based policy decisions, and performance monitoring.

The Urban Development Institute of Australia said the report outlined the core challenge of planning our cities: ensuring that planning goals were achievable. UDIA National President Julie Katz said Australia's current housing supply crisis was the result of uncertainty caused by inefficient planning systems combined with overly burdensome taxes and charges, and a lack of infrastructure provision.

"What the COAG report highlights most of all is that planning with the greatest of intentions won't work unless it is supported by government at all levels, industry as the providers of homes and infrastructure, and the communities where development will occur," said Ms Katz.

"If our cities are going to grow, we need to get communities involved at the front end, giving the plans legitimacy and communities a sense of certainty.

"Likewise, the development industry needs certainty. If economic viability of development is left out of the equation, then the fact is that homes will not be built and housing affordability will continue to spiral out of the reach of Australians in our capitals.

"The COAG report backs up what the industry has known for many years – if strategic planning ignores the economic viability of housing or infrastructure projects, those projects won't be delivered.

"The COAG report makes it clear there needs to be a framework to encourage industry investment and innovation for our future cities."

Ms Katz said UDIA supported the COAG report's findings that:

- Strategic plans must be integrated to include land-use and transport planning, economic and infrastructure development, environmental assessment and urban development.
- Strategic planning must include better public consultation to ensure even those who oppose plan directions recognise the legitimacy of the plan
- Economic viability of project delivery must be a factor considered in whether the market can deliver projects included in the plans
- Governments must consider the impact of its taxes and the regulatory framework on the market's ability to deliver projects
- Strategic plans must be evidence-based
- Strategic plans must be outcome-focused and measured via transparent reporting of outcomes

Ms Katz said there were issues within the report of cross-government cooperation that UDIA believed warranted further examination.

"For example, with land use planning around airports, the Commonwealth Government holds a view that we believe could affect the ability of states and territories to house future populations," she said.

She said that all governments needed to be on the same page via a whole-of-government approach and within governments, inter-agency cooperation.

"Federal government funding decisions in particular have a crucial role in the delivery or non-delivery of strategic state priorities such as major infrastructure."

The report also highlighted that in many state jurisdictions strategic planning decisions were made in the absence of involvement of treasuries or other government departments, which meant sections of government may not support a plan's objectives.

"If that's the case, strategic plans for cities may be visions that lack a funding commitment."

A common theme of the report was that accountability measures in goal delivery needed improvement across most states and territories.

"The success of plans for cities needs to be reviewed on the basis of hard evidence – if plans are not achieving their goals, that needs to be made transparent."

"If you boil this report down to one word, it's certainty. If we can create strategic plans that provide certainty to all parties and that are economically viable and have legitimacy in the community, then we are looking at a much brighter future for Australian cities."

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