

# Media Release

**For Immediate Release**

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## **HOUSING POLICY MUST BE ELECTION PRIORITY**

In the lead up to the Federal Election, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) is calling on all major political parties to detail how they intend to make housing more affordable for all Australians.

UDIA National President Julie Katz said Australia was facing a severe shortage of affordable housing because of sustained low levels of housing production.

“The situation is critical,” she said.

“Constrained greenfield land supply, poor planning, inadequate investment in infrastructure, and a number of unfair and inequitable taxes are suppressing activity in the housing industry, and are all contributing to the affordability problem,” said Ms Katz.

“But this can be solved through better planning, smarter regulation, more infrastructure funding, and a fairer tax system. This will relieve the stress on household budgets, improve economic growth and productivity, and provide a brighter future for our kids.”

As highlighted in the recent CommSec State of the States Report and also outlined in recent RBA minutes, a vibrant housing sector will be vital for the on-going growth of Australian economy, particularly as the mining boom winds down.

UDIA has identified four key actions that the incoming Federal Government must undertake as a matter of priority:

- Deliver infrastructure to support our growing population
- Deliver affordable housing now, for present and future generations
- Create a stronger economy and more jobs through a fairer taxation system
- Cut red tape

Further details regarding how these four key actions can be achieved are attached to this statement.

For comment or further information, please contact:

Julie Katz – 03 8866 0288, 0413 307 030

Liam Foley – 02 6230 0255

## AUSTRALIA NEEDS AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The quality of life in Australia's cities and towns is under threat.

For many, the great Australian dream is fleeting, as the ever increasing cost of housing locks them out of home ownership forever. Others are struggling to access housing altogether, putting family budgets under stress, and people's futures at risk. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Australia's poor housing affordability, population growth pressures, and transport congestion can be solved through better planning, smarter regulation, more infrastructure funding, and a fairer tax system.

This will relieve the stress on household budgets, improve economic growth and productivity, and provide a brighter future for our kids. That's why UDIA is calling on all sides of politics to take the necessary actions to address Australia's housing affordability crisis.

### ACTIONS FOR GOVERNMENT

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#### "HOW WILL I GET TO WORK FROM WHERE I CAN AFFORD TO LIVE?"

##### *ACTION: Deliver modern infrastructure to support our growing population by:*

- Exploring new ways to finance infrastructure at the local level by leveraging funding with private sector investment, and establishing a National Infrastructure Fund (as outlined in the Urban Coalition's – "New Deal for Urban Australia).
- Consolidating local infrastructure-enabling programmes, such as the housing affordability fund and building better Regional Cities, into one programme, and committing to ongoing and increased funding of the scheme.
- Creating a National Land Use Plan by linking Commonwealth funding to the establishment of State based land use plans that provide detailed, costed infrastructure plans underpinned by delivery timeframes.

#### "WHERE WILL MY CHILDREN BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO LIVE?"

##### *ACTION: Deliver affordable housing now and for future generations by:*

- Identifying the land needed in our cities based on population forecasts, land use plans, and housing production, and establish a fifteen (15) year plan for the roll-out of land in our cities.
- Regularly auditing Commonwealth-owned land with a view to making unused Commonwealth land available for housing development in our cities.
- Establishing an inter-governmental agreement on local infrastructure charges to ensure that developer costs are benchmarked around the country and made public.

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URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA (NATIONAL)

GPO BOX 2507 CANBERRA ACT 2601

T: 02 6230 0255 and 02 6230 0055

F: 02 6230 0311

E: [udia@udia.com.au](mailto:udia@udia.com.au)

## “HOW CAN WE GIVE OUR CHILDREN THE SAME OPPORTUNITIES THAT WE HAD?”

### *ACTION: Create a stronger economy and more jobs through a fairer taxation system by:*

- Encouraging State and Territory Governments to phase out stamp duty on property purchases over a five (5) year period.
- Broadening the base of the GST which will assist States to phase out stamp duties.
- Including developer levies in GST cost base calculations to improve housing affordability.

## “WHY IS GOVERNMENT MAKING HOUSING SO EXPENSIVE”

### *ACTION: Cut red tape by:*

- Enhancing opportunities for strategic assessments and bilateral agreements under the EPBC Act to create an integrated environmental approval process and avoid duplication.
- Directing the Productivity Commission to undertake a national benchmarking project to identify development bottlenecks in state and territory planning systems.
- Stopping Commonwealth measures to restrict development around airports and airport corridors beyond the current and existing standards.

## ABOUT THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE OF AUSTRALIA

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA) is the peak body representing the urban development industry throughout Australia. The Institute is a not for profit organisation, and has in excess of 4000 members across the country.

In addition to representing the interests of the development industry, UDIA also represents a range of professionals involved in urban development, including lawyers, engineers, planners and contractors.

### CONTACT UDIA

GPO Box 2507 Canberra ACT 2601

E: [udia@udia.com.au](mailto:udia@udia.com.au)

T: 02 6230 0255 and 02 6230 0055

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