

Media Release

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Surplus Commonwealth Land should be used for Housing

Tens of thousands of new homes could potentially be accommodated on underutilised Commonwealth Government land across Australia's major cities, increasing supply and improving housing affordability.

The Urban Development institute of Australia (UDIA) is calling for the Commonwealth Government to undertake thorough, regular auditing of its land assets, in order to identify and make available surplus land for housing development.

"There are numerous examples of redundant or underutilised commonwealth land such as defence sites occupying prime city locations," said UDIA National President Julie Katz.

"They're often in older, established areas, and already have good access to transport, employment and community infrastructure such as schools and shops, making them perfect for infill development.

"Development of surplus sites could provide a rapid and cost effective way of bringing much needed new housing to market, improving affordability and supporting jobs in the process."

The sale of underutilised sites would also generate tens or even hundreds of millions of dollars for the Federal Government, which could be used to further improve city infrastructure and provide for additional community facilities.

For example, the redevelopment of the Bulimba Army Barracks in Brisbane could potentially provide in excess of 1000 new homes, whilst the Keswick Army barracks in Adelaide could free up land for approximately 750 new homes.

Many Commonwealth sites have considerable heritage and environmental value, which with careful development, can be opened up to the public, increasing the amenity and attractiveness of an area. Even where sites are still in use, there may be the potential to redevelop parts of the site for housing, whilst still retaining its existing uses.

"The first step in redeveloping these sites is for the Federal Government to make a genuine effort to actually identify what land is surplus to its needs, and might be suitable for other uses," concluded Ms Katz.

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