

Media Release

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PLANS FOR FUTURE PERTH LACK LEADERSHIP

The Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA WA) says the state government's [Perth@3.5million](#) plan will fail unless greater leadership is shown and a public education campaign is initiated that promotes the benefits of greater density around activity centres to the wider community.

"A clearer public understanding of what infill and density really mean for Perth is required so that we can move forward and successfully meet the demands of a growing population in a way that is supported by the whole community," UDIA CEO Allison Hailes said.

"The current focus on percentages and infill 'targets' can promote fear within communities and take away from the fact that quality, higher density development can be achieved in appropriate locations both in existing (infill) and new areas," Ms Hailes said.

"With a focus on meeting targets we are missing the important issue of Perth becoming a more connected and ultimately a more liveable city," Ms Hailes said.

"UDIA members are involved in developing both infill and greenfield sites and their key motivation is producing quality land developments and innovative built form options for a range of market segments," Ms Hailes said.

"Higher density development can mean creating liveable communities that suit a range of lifestyles for a growing population while maximising the potential of infrastructure assets," Ms Hailes said.

UDIA is also calling for more transparency with respect to the existing infrastructure network capacity and more support for local governments to undertake strategic planning to ensure they are 'open for business' when it comes to increased development.

"The state government needs to provide appropriate funding and actively bring together key stakeholders that can make their plan for Perth work," Ms Hailes said. "A significant stakeholder in this is local government."

"Local governments must be able to clearly demonstrate where and how they can achieve higher density development and we must also ensure they take a coordinated approach to delivering outcomes on the ground in conjunction with private industry," Ms Hailes said.

"There are barriers to infill development that local government needs support in addressing," Ms Hailes said. "For example, fragmented land holdings are a major barrier that has been identified by UDIA and a number of other organisations including the Australian Housing and Urban Research Institute (AHURI)."

"In order to avoid ad hoc infill that is created simply to fulfil targets, consolidating land holdings can provide the ability to deliver precinct scale development," Ms Hailes said.

Rhys Kelly, President UDIA (WA) P: 9386 8080 M: 0418 941 774	Allison Hailes 0438 079 077

“Small scale developments in fragmented locations can lead to poor outcomes,” Ms Hailes said.

“Most successful infill projects are delivered at a large enough scale that they are able to activate areas while having due consideration for infrastructure capacity and the surrounding amenity,” Ms Hailes said.

“Local governments can be their own worst enemy when it comes to fragmenting land,” Ms Hailes said. “By allowing more and more single subdivisions in order to try and achieve density targets, they just make it harder to piece it all back together and create something at a scale that can result in a better outcome for the broader community.”

“We also need to be realistic about the viability of projects in relation to affordability and deliverability,” Ms Hailes said.

“Take the cost of a vertical build for example,” Ms Hailes said. “The cost of construction is considerable, and so in order to deliver an apartment project at an affordable price point, true scale needs to be achieved in order to make it viable.”

“At the end of the day, discussions around the cost of development, particularly to government, also need to be placed into context,” Ms Hailes said.

“Money spent on infrastructure in order to foster quality development in new and existing areas should be seen as an investment,” Ms Hailes said. “The economic stimulus that this investment can create is quite obviously significant.”

“All of these issues would be better dealt with if the community was aware of the benefits and the issues surrounding infill development as well as how quality medium and high density development can achieve excellent outcomes for surrounding communities,” Ms Hailes said.

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