



HIA Planning Blueprint Scorecard



Assessing progress on delivery of the
National Planning Reform Blueprint

August 2024

Executive Summary

In August last year, National Cabinet endorsed a National Housing Accord (The Accord) that included an aspirational target to build 1.2 million new well-located homes over 5 years from mid-2024.

To support delivery of the 1.2 million new homes target as part of the Housing Accord state and territory governments have committed to:

- undertaking expedited zoning, planning and land release to deliver on the housing target.
- working with Local Governments to deliver planning and land-use reforms that will make housing supply more responsive to demand over time ensuring achievement of targets for social and affordable housing are met.

Additional supplementary measures include:

New Home Bonus

A \$3 billion New Home Bonus program which aims to provide performance-based funding to states and territories that achieve more than their share of the 1.2 million homes target.

This funding intends on incentivising states and territories to undertake the reforms necessary to boost housing supply.

Housing Support Program

A \$1.5 billion Housing Support Program that provides competitive funding for state and territory and local governments to kick-start housing supply with key infrastructure delivery to make projects shovel (build) ready faster.

This funding aims to provide targeted activation payments for initiatives such as connecting essential services, amenities to support new housing development, or building planning capability.

National Planning Reform Blueprint

National Cabinet also agreed to a National Planning Reform Blueprint to outline planning, zoning, land release and other measures to improve housing supply and affordability.

Why planning reform is needed?

It is well established that Australia's planning systems are overwhelmed and in need of significant reform to enable the delivery of not only the Housing Accord housing targets, but to meet the long term demand for housing.

HIA is broadly supportive of the National Planning Reform Blueprint and its key reform measures including:

- Updating state, regional, and local strategic plans to reflect housing supply targets.
- Promoting medium and high-density housing in well-located areas close to existing public transport connections, amenities and employment.
- Streamlining approval pathways.

By adopting the measure of the National Planning Reform Blueprint, state, territory and local governments would be able to substantially improve current planning approval processes which would in turn support more timely delivery of all forms of new housing including greenfield, infill and multi-dwelling housing.

Why is it important?

Development is a vital component of the Australian economy. It shapes the fabric in which Australia lives.

In recent years, the pressure on planning systems has increased, due both to increasing levels of development activity and to address the well documented housing shortages.

There is general agreement that existing development assessment processes in Australia could be substantially improved – many jurisdictions are already actively working towards this goal.

Assessment systems can only respond to these pressures if they are efficient and have clear policy objectives.

The National Planning Reform Blueprint provides a model that will guide the various jurisdictions in developing efficient, effective and harmonised development assessment systems.

The initiatives outlined in the Blueprint, if implemented, will streamline development assessment frameworks to provide productive outcomes and be more fit for purpose in today's environment.

How can approvals be streamlined, and timeframes reduced?

Across the nation, for various reasons, it is taking far too long to get planning approval for a stand-alone house or an apartment.

Year on year this is severely compromising the nations required housing supply being achieved.

To achieve the National Housing Accord target of building 1.2 million homes by 2029 each state and territory must recognise the role they have to play and undertake true and meaningful planning reform to significantly reduce approval timeframes.

For a stand-alone house it is not uncommon for a planning approval to take in excess of 6 months to obtain and for an apartment 12 months plus has become an undesirable industry standard. These protracted timeframes have led to the gross undersupply of homes that Australians are currently experiencing.

The reasons can be explained such as conservative local government decision making often requiring unnecessary and protracted consultation with neighbours and the broader community, through to inability to retain experienced planning staff.

Common reasons cited for delays in approvals include:

- Disconnect between planning rules and statutory implementation leading to regulatory duplication and unnecessary additional red tape.
- Continual requests for more documentation and reports as part of 'box ticking' exercise to obtain approval, adding to costs, time and uncertainty of projects.
- Simple standalone house approvals and more complex approvals being assessed in a similar fashion rather than having streamlined and simple approvals prioritising housing assessments.
- Inconsistent approaches to approvals across different local governments.
- Lack of resourcing in local governments for standard development approvals and inability for private sector to assist with faster decisions making.
- Statutory approval timeframes not being met or requests for further information, resulting in 'starting the clock' processes for approval timeframes.
- States and territories having a form a code-assess housing but local governments tweaking rules and placing additional conditions on approvals.

HIA Scorecard

To ensure the delivery of these much-needed planning reform measures and overcome the issues identified above, HIA has prepared the 'HIA Planning Blueprint Score Card (The HIA Scorecard)' to monitor and track progress of these key planning reform measures.

The HIA Scorecard provides an analysis and aggregated scoring system that highlights the relative strength or weakness of the planning systems in each state and territory against the implementation of the key reforms identified in the National Planning Reform Blueprint.

The HIA Scorecard additionally identifies each and state and territories share of new homes required to be built as part of the 1.2 million homes target both annually and over the 5 year period.

Where to from here?

The HIA Scorecard has been launched to coincide with the commencement of the Housing Accord period and it is intended that the HIA Scorecard will be reviewed on an annual basis over the next 5 years to assess progress delivery of the Housing Accord 1.2 million homes target.

The HIA Scorecard is intended to be the start of an important national conversation about the content, structure, and performance of planning systems across the country.

It is vital that planning systems can deliver clear, consistent, and measurable outcomes that facilitate the greater delivery of housing supply.

All levels of government must be committed to developing and maintaining a robust planning system that can deliver housing in a timely manner, in the right location and at an affordable price point.

An ongoing conversation about the need for planning systems to commit to improvements that streamline assessment and decision making is a key component moving forward.

National Planning Reform Blueprint

HIA Planning Blueprint Score Card - A plan to deliver greater housing supply

The Housing Industry Association (HIA) has undertaken an assessment of National Cabinet's 10 point National Planning Reform Blueprint including identifying, and in some cases re-defining, the key planning reform measures needed from the Blueprint to enable the delivery of National Cabinet's Housing Accord target of building 1.2 million homes over the next 5 years.

The HIA Scorecard provides an indicative assessment score out of 5 to rate each State and Territory's planning system and its current capacity to enable delivery of the National Housing Accord housing targets.



Bringing more shovel ready land to market

- Undertaking planning, zoning, land release and other reforms to increase housing density, to meet housing supply targets
- Updating state, regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets



Cut red tape

- Reforms to address barriers to timely issuing of development approvals
- Reforms to support rapid delivery of social and affordable housing

The Metropolitan and Housing strategies of each State / Territory were strategically assessed by HIA to determine an aggregate score out of 5 based on the themes above



Infrastructure provision

- Government funding for state and territory and local government and private developers to kick start housing supply
- Providing targeted activation payments for connecting essential services to support faster delivery of new housing developments

While infrastructure provisions were not part of the Planning Blueprint, they are critical for the timely delivery of shovel ready and build ready land and should be considered alongside the necessary planning reform measures



Higher density housing

- Promoting medium density and high-density housing in well located areas
- Addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density



Faster decisions

- Adequately resourcing built environmental professionals, including planners, in local government
- Streamlining approval pathways, including strengthened 'call in powers'
- Prioritising planning amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas

Western Australia

25,817 per year

Aggregate score: 3.0/5

Metropolitan strategy:
Perth and Peel @ 3.5 million / Directions 2031 and beyond

Housing strategy:
WA Housing Strategy 2020-2030

Northern Territory

2,285 per year

Aggregate score: 1.5/5

Metropolitan strategy:
Darwin Regional Land Use Plan

Housing strategy:
Northern Territory Housing Strategy 2020-2025

Queensland

49,148 per year

Aggregate score: 1.5/5

Metropolitan strategy:
Shaping SEQ 2023

Housing strategy:
Queensland Housing Strategy 2017-2027

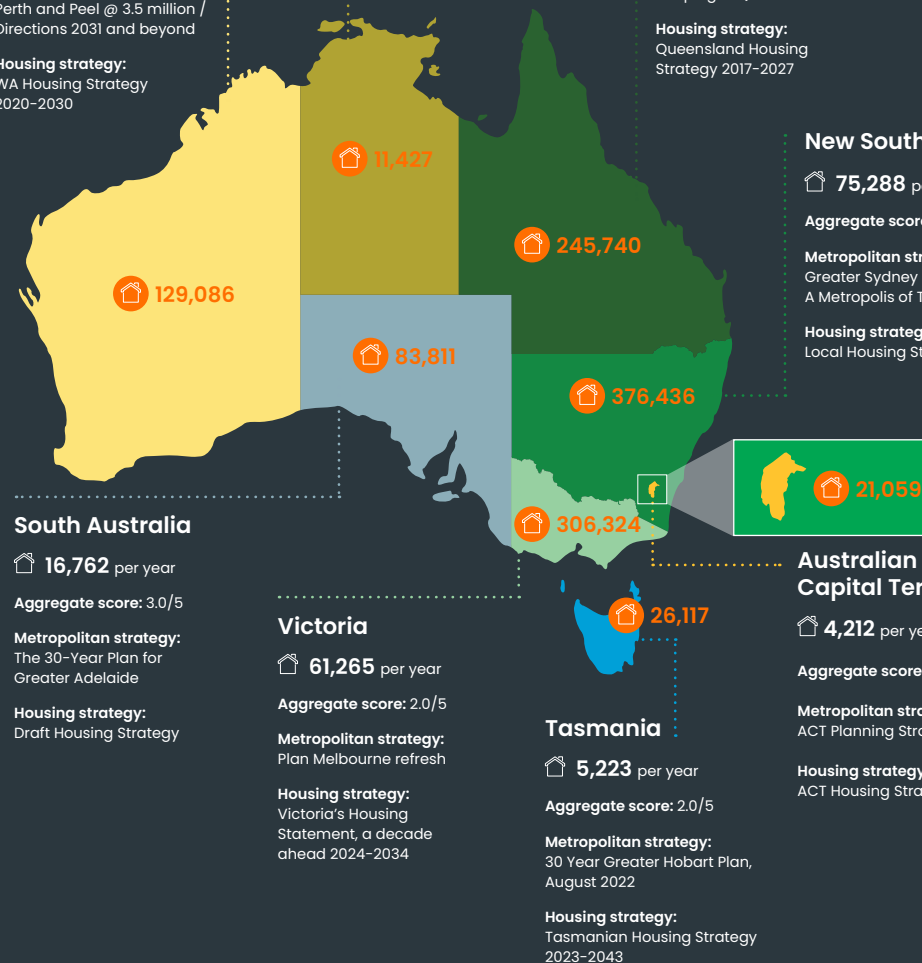
New South Wales

75,288 per year

Aggregate score: 1.5/5

Metropolitan strategy:
Greater Sydney Region Plan - A Metropolis of Three Cities

Housing strategy:
Local Housing Strategies



Total number of homes to be built over the 5-year Housing Accord target period

Average number of homes to be built per year over the 5-year Housing Accord target period

1.2 million homes in 5 years

State-by-State Housing Delivery Targets

To build 1.2 million homes nationally over the next 5 years it will require a significant uptick in new housing to be delivered in each state and territory.

Equally it will mean that each state and territory have the appropriate provisions and tools in place to meet their share of the 1.2 million homes.

The breakdown of the state-by-state share of this is outlined in table 1.

Table 1: State-by-State Housing Delivery Targets to Build 1.2 million homes by 2029

State/Territory	Share of homes to be built 2024-2029	Average Annual Homes to be built	Expressed as %
Australian Capital Territory	21,059	4,212	2%
New South Wales	376,436	75,288	31%
Northern Territory	11,427	2,285	1%
Queensland	245,740	49,148	20%
South Australia	83,811	16,762	7%
Tasmania	26,117	5,223	2%
Victoria	306,324	61,265	26%
Western Australia	129,086	25,817	11%
Total Australia	1,200,000	240,000	100%

Previous Housing Delivery

To put in comparison on the volume of housing delivery needed some examples from the previous 5 year period 2019-2023 are:

- NSW built 262,179 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 114,257 homes short.
- NT built 3,075 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 8,352 homes short.
- Queensland built 176,531 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 69,209 homes short.
- SA built 60,302 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 23,509 homes short.
- Tasmanian built 16,483 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 9,634 homes short.
- Western Australia built 87,306 homes over the period, whereas to meet the housing accord target share they would be 41,780 homes short.

All forms of Housing Needed – greenfield, infill and multi-dwelling housing

A key part of the delivery of this volume of new housing is to substantially streamline approval processes to fast track all forms of new housing including greenfield, infill and multi-dwelling housing.

Focussing on only one form of housing such as multi-dwelling housing won't be sufficient. Rather all forms of new housing, and in all locations is needed, as are reforms necessary to enable their delivery in a timely manner.

Equally the delivery of this volume of new housing requires all areas and levels of government working together in a unified fashion and having increased housing delivery and driving cost of housing down as a key priority.

National Planning Reform Blueprint explained

The 10-point National Planning Reform Blueprint announced by National Cabinet in August last year included the following measures:

1. Updating state, regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets.
2. Undertaking planning, zoning, land release and other reforms, such as increasing density, to meet their share of housing supply targets.
3. Streamlining approval pathways, including strengthened 'call in powers', and prioritising planning amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas e.g., by addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density housing.
4. Promoting medium and high-density housing in well located areas close to existing public transport connections, amenities and employment.
5. Reforms to support the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing.
6. Reforms to address barriers to the timely issuing of development approvals.
7. Consideration of the phased introduction of inclusionary zoning and planning to support permanent affordable, social and specialist housing in ways that do not add to construction costs.
8. Rectifying gaps in housing design guidance and building certification to ensure the quality of new builds, particularly apartments.
9. Improving community consultation processes.
10. Adequately resourcing built environmental professionals, including planners, in local government.

The Blueprint enables the federal government to have greater oversight and coordination with state and territory and local governments in planning matters particularly as they relate to meeting the housing targets and funding measures as set out in the National Housing Accord.

It also signals a commitment by state and territory governments on the need for meaningful reform to support greater supply of housing in a timelier fashion.

HIA Scorecard Explained

In developing the HIA Scorecard it has taken a strategic assessment of the Metropolitan and Housing strategies of each state and territory.

As part of preparing the HIA Scorecard the 10-points of the National Planning Reform Blueprint have been more logically grouped into four key themes and each of the relevant aspects included under the themes of:

- Bringing more shovel ready land to market
- Higher density housing
- Cut red tape
- Faster decisions.

Table 3: HIA Scorecard Key Planning Reform Themes & Measures

THEME	DESCRIPTION	MEASURES
1	Bringing more shovel ready land to market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Updating state, regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertaking planning, zoning, land release and other reforms, such as increasing density, to meet their share of housing supply targets
2	Cut red tape	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforms to support the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reforms to address barriers to the timely issuing of development approvals.
2	Higher density housing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promoting medium density and high-density housing in well located areas.
4	Faster decisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining approval pathways, including strengthened 'call in powers'
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising planning amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas e.g., addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density housing.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequately resourcing built environmental professionals, including planners, in local government.

What are the elements of a well performing planning system?

In developing the HIA Scorecard consideration was given to those elements that are integral to a well performing planning system. Primarily, a planning system must recognise the importance of delivering housing affordable outcomes.

Efficient and effective planning systems should include clear targets, measures of success, defined timelines and an agenda to review and determine performance.

Planning systems must also be bold enough to identify and reduce barriers and harness opportunities to address problems.

How can approvals be streamlined, and timeframes reduced?

Across the nation, for various reasons, it is taking far too long to get planning approval for a stand-alone house or an apartment. These protracted timeframes have in most cases led to a gross undersupply of homes between 2019-2023.

To achieve the National Housing Accord target of building 1.2 million homes by 2029 each state and territory must recognise the role they have to play and undertake true and meaningful planning reform to significantly reduce these approval timeframes.

The reasons can be explained such as conservative local government decision making through to inability to retain experienced planning staff.

The most common factors HIA has determined by developing the Scorecard is that:

- Strategic planning objectives and statutory implementation do not align leading to regulatory duplication and red tape.
- Means in which the private sector can assist with faster decisions is not being seriously entertained by government.
- Many states and territories have of form a code-assess housing though those governments have not been prepared to take this to the next step by allowing it to form the basis of a private certification system to ease the burden on planning authorities and see improved performance of planning systems.

Grading each State and Territory Planning Systems

Based on the four themes identified each state and territories planning systems has been graded an aggregate score out of 5 which indicates its ability to deliver greater housing supply and progress on implementation of the key planning reforms measures in the National Planning Reform Blueprint.

The HIA Scorecard provides a qualitative assessment drawing current Metropolitan and Housing Strategies and their individual regulatory frameworks. This has been benchmarked against the 10-points of the Planning Blueprint as those measures are reflected in their current planning regimes.

Appendix 1 provides a breakdown of the grading for each state and territory as well as identifying measures that could be implemented to improve their systems and in turn housing delivery and supply outcomes.

Appendix 2 provides an assessment of each state and territories systems against the 10-points of the Planning Blueprint to determine whether that item is being satisfied or partially satisfied. This assessment is accompanied by a brief overarching comment.

Grading each State and Territories Planning System against National Planning Reform Blueprint

Australian Capital Territory

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes ACT was given an aggregate score of **2.5 / 5**

The ACT's planning system is of mediocre performance due to a lack of strong connection between strategic objectives and statutory implementation. This results in a deficit of shovel ready land being brought to market in a cost-effective manner and the provision of higher density housing being slow to respond to Canberra's growing demand.

As the new outcomes-based planning system approach is relatively untested it will need to be monitored and transparently reported. It is still unclear if red tape has actually been cut and decisions will be made more efficiently. A concern remains that despite the aspiration of the new system being 'outcomes focussed', there have been arbitrary controls included for non-planning reasons.

While the ACT building industry delivered a level of housing equivalent to the share of new housing target under the Housing Accord in the 2019 – 2023 period, this was driven mostly by unprecedented government stimulus in response to COVID-19 pandemic.

Housing forecasts though predict that an equivalent level of new housing being delivered over the next five year period in the ACT is highly unlikely. It is therefore critical that the key reform measures of the Planning Blueprint are efficiently and correctly implemented in the ACT's planning system.

Equally, to ensure that the planning system not only plans for the right number of homes to be built but the right number of homes are delivered on the ground.

Planning actions to help improve the ACT planning system could include:

- Develop a suite of statutory tools that implement streamlined approvals pathways to deliver planning priorities outlined in the 'Statement of Planning Priorities 2024-25', such as higher density development around key precincts, shops and rapid transport connections and diverse housing choice in middle ring suburbs.
- Review the new planning system which commenced in November 2023 to ensure the outcomes-based planning system approach is fair and equitable for all stakeholders.
- Streamline the land development process and improve transparency of performance, so that the pace of land release does not continue to fall below the levels required to meet housing demand, contributing to rising land values and reducing affordability.

New South Wales

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes NSW was given an aggregate score of **1.5 / 5**

While the NSW Government is taking steps to address state-wide housing shortages, the planning system continues to fail at the delivery level. There is a mismatch of land zoned for housing and the supply of enabling infrastructure, as well as approval processes being too costly and slow, which is significantly impacting housing affordability.

Development of new policy by the state government to deliver more high-density and medium-density housing across metropolitan areas is encouraging, but this needs to be reinforced by an ongoing supply of lower-density homes on greenfield sites.

Greater focus must also be directed on speeding up council approval processes and this can be achieved through the expansion of complying development approval pathways.

Building figures for NSW between 2019-2023 indicate the most significant national shortfall in terms of delivering the state's share of the National Housing Accord target of 1.2 million homes.

Planning actions to help improve the NSW planning system could include:

- Ensuring a continuous supply of serviced and development-ready land to underpin the delivery of new homes at affordable prices.
- Addressing the intergovernmental complexities of the NSW Planning System which result in inefficiencies, delays and extra costs for home buyers.
- Expanding the use of code-assessment by private certifiers to reduce approval backlogs in councils while freeing-up council time for more complex assessments.

Northern Territory

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes NT was given an aggregate score of **1.5 / 5**

The NT planning system lacks strong strategic direction and objectives to guide residential development. This has an adverse impact across all four of the HIA Scorecard themes. It significantly hinders the ability to implement suitable statutory planning instruments that provide certainty for industry and develop efficient decision-making processes.

As part of implementing the Planning Blueprint, a broad review of the NT planning system should be undertaken. Such a review must identify and address the connection that is required between strategic objectives and statutory planning instruments to bring about improvements and efficiencies into the planning system.

The *Bringing Land to Market* report released in 2021 and the recommendations within it were agreed by government and have endorsed 12 of the 23 outlined in the report.

It is imperative that the whole set of recommendations are embraced and implemented to provide an adequate supply of titled land to allow construction of new dwellings.

Planning actions to help improve the NT planning system could include:

- Greater investment in strategic planning to allow more areas for urban growth to be investigated. Like the Greater Holtze area plan and the Holtze to Elizabeth River strategic framework plan Increased strategic planning must be prioritized and brought forward to stimulate development.
- Improved implementation of planning assessment guidance documents, such as Designing Better to better facilitate streamlined approvals.
- Prioritise a land development strategy that adequately identifies future land supply and population needs for the next 20 years
- Set out an infrastructure delivery program that priorities key trunk infrastructure to fast track the delivery of shovel ready land.

Queensland

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes Queensland was given an aggregate score of **1.5 / 5**

Whilst the framework of the planning system is generally adequate, it is the application that requires improvement across all four the themes of the HIA Scorecard themes.

Significant improvements are required for the monitoring and reporting of land supply. At present this is being inconsistently applied across stages of development and throughout the state. This creates issues in knowing when and where shovel ready land will come to market and what barriers need to be addressed for streamline approval processes to enable faster decisions for both land and apartments.

Clearer strategic direction and the right statutory tools must be implemented that cuts red tape and enables faster decisions so higher density housing can be approved, in the right location, in a timely manner. Urgent planning reform is needed requiring Brisbane and other major cities to identify and facilitate appropriate infill locations. Planning controls must support the timely issuing of development approvals in those areas.

Queensland home building figures between 2019-2023 indicate the second most significant shortfall compared to what is required to be built over the following five years for Queensland to meet its share of the

National Housing Accord target of 1.2 million homes. A more consistent state-wide approach to providing shovel ready land would help in meeting the required number of homes over the next five years.

As part of implementing the Planning Blueprint the Queensland planning system should be overhauled to address under reporting and monitoring of land supply, as this has many adverse follow-on impacts such as not being able to identify with comprehensive data where infill development should be concentrated and facilitated.

Planning actions to help improve the Queensland planning system could include:

- Reporting on land supply, at all stages of development, across all regions. Reporting must be easy for all to access, regular and consistent.
- Develop a state-wide infill development code, which eliminates current barriers and constraints to such development approvals.
- Cutting red tape to provide for faster decisions. This can be achieved by reducing regulatory barriers to delivering new homes by forming a single state authority responsible for planning and housing reform, responsible for inter-department coordination of policy reform and consultation with industry.

South Australia

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes SA was given an aggregate score of **3 / 5**

It is recognised that since March 2021 SA has had a phased introduction of a new planning system, starting with metro areas. This new planning whilst an improvement still requires greater alignment between strategic planning objectives and statutory planning implementation.

Across the four themes of the HIA Scorecard SA's planning system performs adequately, such as identifying opportunities for higher density housing and monitoring and reporting of land supply.

Online lodgement of planning applications is a feature of the new planning system, this has gone some way in helping to streamline approval pathways though further refinements are required. Some red tape that impedes fast decision making still exists.

Industry is encouraged by the recent release of the Governments' Housing Roadmap that included bold new planning reforms that could see houses built on development sites up to 18 months faster, as the Housing Roadmap includes streamlining of both the code amendment process and resulting land division. Successful implementation of these initiatives could result in an improved score at the next review.

Planning actions to help improve the SA planning system could include:

- Extending the 'accepted development' model that applies to detached homes in Master Planned Neighbourhood and Master Planned Township zones to other areas of the state, to help address resourcing issues experienced in the local government sector.
- Amending the scope of work for planning certifiers to help address resourcing issues experienced in the local government sector and decrease turnaround times for applications.
- Following recent holistic planning reform review strategic objectives and statutory implementation to ensure unintended barriers and constraints to development, such as tree and driveway provisions, are addressed.

Tasmania

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes Tasmania was given an aggregate score of **2 / 5**

Tasmania's planning system is considered mediocre, as it lacks adequate focus on residential land, including identifying strategic development opportunities and provision of well-located higher density housing.

Whilst most of the fundamentals of a planning system are present, it requires refinement and further development of some strategic and statutory elements. Approval pathways need to be more clearly identified and streamlined. This should be done by cutting red tape and mapping out pathways for faster decisions.

Planning actions to help improve the Tasmanian planning system could include:

- Require regional land use strategies to have a greater emphasis on the status of residential land at all stages of the development pipeline.
- Provide for higher density housing by developing a targeted medium-density residential code.
- Cut red tape by completing PlanBuild to provide for single online lodgement and tracking of approvals through the system.

Victoria

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes Victoria was given an aggregate score of **2 / 5**

Whilst Victoria's planning framework is comprehensive its performance is mediocre as it lacks adequate requirements for the transparent monitoring and reporting of land supply and does not fully implement a code-assess system that would assist with faster decisions.

Victoria's Urban Development Program is an annual update on supply of greenfield residential land in Melbourne's Growth Areas and the pipeline of major residential redevelopment projects in established areas. Councils are not mandated to submit data and due to the time lag it is not particularly helpful to industry.

Victoria's ResCode system was introduced in 2001 and has not had any significant review since to keep up to date with contemporary housing needs and desired residential outcomes. However, a review has recently got underway though this is only focusing on particular standards, whereas it is considered a whole scale review is warranted. To facilitate faster decision making the opportunity must be explored to develop and incorporate ResCode as part of a private planning certification system.

Notwithstanding homes built in the 2019 – 2023 period were only marginally below that which HIA has determined to be built to meet their share of the NHA target this was driven by government responses to COVID to keep residential construction stimulated. For this to continue it is critical elements of the NPRB are efficiently and correctly implemented and Victoria's planning system is monitored and appropriately amended to ensure that the planning system not only plans for the right number of homes to be built but the right number of homes are delivered on the ground.

Planning actions to help improve the Victorian planning system could include:

- A complete review and replacement of the existing planning legislation to ensure it is up to date and removes unnecessary decision making processes and benchmark the new system against the Planning Blueprint.
- Review and update the functionality and transparency of the Urban Development Program to provide real-time monitoring and reporting of the supply of greenfield residential land in Melbourne's Growth Areas. Currently the Urban Development Program is an annual report on supply of greenfield residential land and the pipeline of major residential redevelopment projects.
- Facilitate faster decisions by completing work relating to codification of residential development applications. The review of ResCode must be clear whether neighbourhood character has a role to play in such assessments and eliminate current subjectivity.

Western Australia

Across the four HIA Scorecard themes WA was given an aggregate score of **3 / 5**

The WA planning system performs adequately, though is burdened in parts by red tape and lack of strategic assessment. Red tape prohibits a sensible approach towards private planning certification to facilitate faster decisions for various development types. Outside of the Perth and Peel region WA's environmental approvals system needs to be supported with greater strategic assessment to avoid regulatory duplication.

WA home building figures between 2019-2023 indicate a moderate shortfall compared to what is required to be built over the following five years for WA to meet its share of the Housing Accord target. If the elements of the WA planning system identified be reformed this would go some way to address this shortfall.

Improvements as outlined will assist in the provision of shovel ready land to market and to support higher density housing being provided in well located areas.

Planning actions to help improve the WA planning system could include:

- Enabling Private Planning Certification, like WA's Building Permit Certification Application process. The pathway for planning determinations could retain Local Government as the decision-maker and offer similar and significant time-saving opportunities for Grouped and Multiple Dwelling developments, along with Single Houses that may be subject to a Design-principles assessment.
- Resourcing a Strategic Assessment for one-stop-shop for environment approvals, similar to WA's Strategic Assessment of the Perth and Peel Region (SAPPR).

Assessment of each state and territories systems against the 10–points of the Planning Blueprint

THEME 1:

Bringing more shovel ready land to market

Action item	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	HIA Comment
Undertaking planning, zoning, land release and other reforms, such as increasing density, to meet their share of housing supply targets.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	State and Territory governments should regularly report on the number of allotments available at key (seven) stages of the subdivision process. This can equally apply to infill and broad- hectare development, regional and major cities.
Updating state regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	The planning system should be led by a strategic and spatial planning approach which balances competing priorities and requires planning authorities to take a holistic approach to achieving planning outcomes, recognising a balance between economic, social and environmental factors.

Are they progressing this action? Yes ● Partially ●

Action item
Undertaking planning, zoning, land release and other reforms, such as increasing density, to meet their share of housing supply targets

Planning, zoning, land release and density targets forms the beginning of a long process to addressing housing supply. Often this process, undertaken by State/Territory or local governments, lacks adequate strategic analysis and context as to the impact this will have in a national setting.

Local and State/Territory government housing supply targets are often considered and discussed only at a relatively small scale. It is paramount that the strategic planning applied when undertaking either of these planning functions becomes more cognisant of and in tune with the national housing agenda.

Recommendation:

- Federal Government to support and encourage State/Territory and local governments to explore the range of planning reforms that will enable each jurisdiction to expeditiously meet their share of housing supply targets.
- Federal Government funding be tied to delivery of meeting specified housing targets under the Housing Accord, with annual payments for meeting and exceeding these targets.
- State/Territory and local governments prioritise and publish a range of planning reform initiatives, including anticipated timeframes, which will assist their share of achieving the Housing Accord targets.

Action item
 Updating state, regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets

Demand for housing is outstripping supply which increases pressure on all parts of the system to deliver housing to meet current and future expected demand. A lack of adequate housing supply leads to housing affordability issues.

The Commitments made by National Cabinet on the National Housing Accord will put downward pressures on housing affordability. It is now critical that the Housing Accord Commitments need to move from being an aspirational objective to ensuring it's delivering on the ground.

Future housing supply and delivery and land releases need to be mapped against future population, migration and immigration levels.

The housing supply commitments under the Accord need to not only be delivered for a one-off five-year period but similar benchmarks need to be set for all future housing targets and commitments.

Recommendations:

- State/Territory governments be required to update and release their respective state, regional and local strategic plans to reflect their share of housing supply targets .
- State/Territory governments be required to report on benchmarking these land releases annually against these strategic plans throughout the life of the Housing Accord (five years).
- As a priority a long-term national agreement to land supply must be developed.
- A suitable Federal Government agency, such as Housing Australia, must be tasked with the authority and responsibility to develop a mandatory strategic plans reporting process.
- The reporting process must require all State/Territory governments to submit on a periodic basis the status of their strategic plan. The strategic plan must be identified with data and details provided regarding land and housing supply and reporting to be made publicly available.

THEME 2:

Cut red tape

Action item	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	HIA Comment
Reforms to support the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	All State/Territory governments have too varying degree initiatives to address this action. Primarily these reforms are represented in Housing Statements (or similar) and require greater alignment with the planning system to have tangible results
Reforms to address barriers to the timely issuing of development approvals.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	In many instances reforms aimed at reducing barriers are undertaken on an ad hoc basis, typically on a council-by-council basis, and seldom have any significant impact. State/ Territory governments would benefit from a more holistic approach to reform to ensure greater benefits are achieved.

Are they progressing this action?

Yes ● Partially ●

Action item:

Reforms to support the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing

Most State/Territory governments already have policy and or planning controls in place to facilitate social and affordable housing in nominated locations. Typically, these measures remove common planning barriers and constraints to provide a smoother approvals pathway and or offer development bonuses which vary depending on the proportion of social or affordable housing being provided.

At times though these measures may not be satisfactory or favourable to a developer as they do not factor in many of the other commercial and economic factors that need to be considered.

Recommendations:

In conjunction with the private sector State/Territory governments be encouraged to continue developing and applying specific planning instruments to support the rapid delivery of social and affordable housing more efficiently, such as:

- Increasing land supply for affordable housing;
- Voluntary supply of affordable housing in exchange for negotiated development bonuses;
- Innovative funding mechanisms;
- Increasing the opportunity for 'joint venture' partnerships; and
- Provision of tax concessions for developers.

Implementation:

- Disallow notification requirements (and appeal rights), call in requirements and consideration of secondary planning controls, such as neighbourhood character, where a nominated percentage of social and affordable housing is being delivered.
- Substantially reduce statutory decision-making timeframes for developments that comply with planning requirements.
- Discourage council's making decisions based on subjective design interpretation.

Action item

Reforms to address barriers to the timely issuing of development approvals

Addressing barriers and constraints to reduce decision making timeframes requires a coordinated approach involving ground truthing prior to implementation.

Intended benefits and outcomes must be identified. It is important industry is engaged to assist in determining if the intention of the proposed reforms will in reality lead to significant improvements to the timely issuing of development approvals.

It is also equally important, depending on the scale of reform, appropriate transition and review mechanisms are included. Review mechanisms should allow the reform to be reversed should implementation demonstrate the reform is not delivering on the intended benefits and outcomes.

Recommendations:

- State/Territory governments be requested to consider methods to fast track the assessment and determination process.
- Allowing private planning practitioners to certify elements of the applications process – such as; Pre Lodgement Endorsement or Assessment to Report Stage.
- Application categories be national standardised, with varying decision-making timeframes tailored to the application category.
- Clearly delineate planning approval requirements from building approval requirements in all states and territories and ensure technical building rules are removed from any form of planning approvals assessments.
- Identify and remove all technical design elements any form of planning approvals assessments. As this duplication is one of the many elements that leads to protracted decision-making timeframes and increased costs and uncertainty for approvals.
- Ensure the planning approvals system is not used as a means to provide all information and answers regarding a development proposal, other approval systems along the approvals continuum can be utilised.

THEME 3:

Higher density housing

Action item	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	HIA Comment
Addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	It is important that superfluous planning controls must be removed and for planning systems to be contemporary and up-to-date
Promoting medium and high- density housing in well located areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	To varying degrees all states, have strategies promoting density requirements in particular locations to achieve desired planning outcomes.

Are they progressing this action?

Yes ● Partially ●

Action items:

- Addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density housing
- Promoting medium and high-density housing in well located areas close to existing public transport connections, amenities and employment

All capital cities throughout Australia have a Metropolitan strategy, most strategies nominate a required ratio of urban infill to broad-hectare development to satisfy population projections.

However, in some cases these strategies are not closely monitored, and the nominated ratio is not being met.

Recommendations:

- State/Territory governments closely monitor their respective metropolitan strategy.
- State/Territory governments require local governments to ambitiously nominate areas for development intensification.
- State/Territory governments implement periodic review processes (including industry consultation) of their respective metropolitan strategies.
- State/Territory government agencies engage and collaborate with local government to advise and facilitate master planning, precinct structure planning etc.
- Ambitious density requirements and dwelling types to be nominated at the strategic planning stage with minimal notification requirements and or appeal rights permitted as part of the development approval process.
- Significantly reduced decision-making timeframes for developments that comply with development approval requirements.
- All States and Territories to implement a medium density housing code to provide as of right approvals.
- Provide fast tracked approvals for duplexes, triplexes and quadplexes to address the missing middle construction class and support greater urban consolidation.

THEME 4:

Faster Decisions

Action item	ACT	NSW	NT	QLD	SA	TAS	VIC	WA	HIA Comment
Streamlining approval pathways, including strengthened 'call in powers.'	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	There are various means to streamline approval pathways. Firstly, any regulatory duplication must be avoided and reduced. Secondly, superfluous planning controls must be removed.
Prioritising planning amendments to support diverse housing outcomes across a range of areas	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	Prioritising planning amendments/ applications is often a positive step toward streamlining planning approvals subject to suitable criteria being applied.
Adequately resourcing built environmental professionals, including planners, in local government.	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	In many cases human resourcing appears adequate in most government sectors. It is the skillset, particularly local government, which requires review. Often the skillset of a local government planning (including elected representatives / Councillors) needs to be developed and broadened to fully understand and comprehend where regulatory duplication is taking place and the economic impact of their assessment and decision

Are they progressing this action?

Yes ● Partially ●

Action items:

- Streamlining approval pathways, including strengthened 'call in powers'
- Prioritising planning amendments to support diverse housing across a range of areas e.g., by addressing barriers to subdivision for appropriate medium density housing

State/Territory and local governments often implement various methods of reactive planning reform aimed at introducing efficiencies into the planning decision-making process.

In many instances these reforms are undertaken in isolation to address a particular barrier or constraint and are not considered holistically or with proper regard for process issues that may arise once implemented.

When streamlining planning approvals all relevant and inter-related parts of the planning system must be considered, including rigorous testing when proposed as to what might be likely unintended outcomes when implemented.

Example 1: Victoria – Ancillary planning controls can still be an inhibitor

Even where VicSmart fast-track approval for one dwelling on a lot of less than 300m² has been introduced, many sites do not qualify because of ancillary planning controls like environment, vegetation, heritage overlays.

There are many cases where planning approval for one dwelling on residentially zoned land takes a minimum of 6-12 months with council modification, because of an overlay or traditional third party notification and appeal rights.

Fast-track approval programs that will create appropriate incremental residential growth are still generally unavailable for most applicants. For example, a Future Homes approval is not designed and costed by the applicant and many sites can not comply with the mandatory application criteria.

Example 2: Queensland – there is a greater focus on streamlining for social and affordable housing projects.

Many of the recent significant planning reforms in Queensland have focused on encouraging social and affordable housing. On 21 October 2022, the Planning Regulation was amended to open the infrastructure designation pathway to registered community housing providers, and housing provided under State funded programs.

Many councils have also moved towards waiving or significantly discounting infrastructure charges for eligible community housing projects.

Further to the above, a Bill has recently been passed by Parliament, *The Housing Availability and Affordability Bill*, which seeks to introduce another state coordinated assessment pathway which the Planning Minister can declare (termed 'State Facilitated Applications').

While this assessment pathway is not limited to registered community housing providers, the legislation details that a minimum affordable housing component of 15% needs to be provided in a development o be eligible for this streamlined pathway.

Recommendations:

- State/Territory governments be required to explore and report on opportunities for genuine planning reform that must clearly demonstrate a reduction of barriers and constraints to planning decision making.
- Consider alternative methods of decision making – such as development assessment panels, with professional and diverse representation.
- Include greater use of planning controls, such as nominating priority development areas for medium density housing.
- Develop national guidelines for State/Territory Ministers and local Councillors (Deed of Delegation) ability to ‘call in’ planning applications (including amendments to Planning schemes). Including when and in what circumstances an application may be ‘called in’, length of time to assess and determine the application and appeal rights for the applicant.

Action item:

Adequately resourcing built environmental professionals, including planners, in local governments.

Built environment professionals, particularly local government planning staff are often burdened with a high administrative workload. Coupled with this is the need to engage with a broad range of associated technical disciplines to assess and determine an application.

Whilst it appears most government agencies dealing with the built environment, are well resourced in terms of numbers it is questionable whether the required on-the-job skill set is being adequately catered for.

There is a role to be played here between government, industry and academia. Collectively it is important to ascertain whether the inefficiencies in the planning system are largely due to resourcing or other factors such as a skills gap.

Recommendations:

- State/Territory governments be required to actively engage with industry, local government, and universities to better understand skill sets, resourcing needs and inter-disciplinary requirements of the residential built environment industry.
- Create job pathways and incentivise to bring more planners into system.
- Empower private certification of planning/delegated assessments to fast-track assessments to ease burden on councils.
- Develop pattern book designs to streamline and fast-track approvals to ease burden on councils and ensure these designs are cost effective and not overly prescriptive nor restrictive in housing designs.
- State/Territory governments to have ‘flying squads’ to proactively assist local governments avoid developing an application backlog that becomes burdensome and difficult to clear.
- Allowing private planning practitioners to certify elements of the applications process – such as; Pre-Lodgement Endorsement or Assessment to Report Stage.
- Better resource and streamline processes at State/Territory appeal tribunals.

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good hands**

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