

# Local Government Association of NSW



## MEDIA RELEASE

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### COUNCILS SUPPORT FRANK SARTOR LAND RELEASE POLICIES

Local Government warns Sydney faces an uncontrolled land grab by developers and a return to the ad-hoc policies of the 70s unless the State Government supports the stance taken by Planning Minister Frank Sartor to ensure orderly land releases.

The President of the Local Government Association of NSW, Cr Genia McCaffery, said councils were concerned at reports that State Cabinet this week would debate streamlining land releases in south-west and north-west Sydney.

"We stand by the Planning Minister, and urge the Government to reject any variation from the Sydney Metro planning strategy which Mr Sartor is engaged with in consultation with our councils.

"Mr Sartor's orderly approach to future land releases is endorsed by all the councils in the Sydney metropolitan area," she said.

Her views are shared by the six presidents of the Regional Organisations of Councils (ROCs) covering 44 councils in the Sydney metropolitan area, who she met with last week.

"Our concern is that the development industry may have convinced the State Government to overturn long standing policies of orderly land release for housing," Cr McCaffery said.

"The Minister for Planning, Frank Sartor, supports orderly land releases in time with the provision of infrastructure requirements. That is sensible, sustainable and responsible.

"The alternative is a free-for-all which may increase land supply and push prices down temporarily, but at a higher cost of providing infrastructure at a later date.

"And those higher costs will fall on local communities long after the original developers have taken their profits and fled the scene," Cr McCaffery said.

Cr McCaffery and the ROCs presidents endorse Mr Sartor's 'orderly approach' to future land releases.

The President of Southern Sydney ROC, Cr Ron Hoenig, said planning amendments introduced in April promised new communities establishing in Sydney would be supported by 'appropriate and timely services and facilities.'

"The Minister told Parliament the changes would allow him to specify areas where infrastructure and services must be delivered hand in hand with development. That assurance must stand," Cr Hoenig said.

The President of WSROC (Western Sydney), Cr Tony Hay, said if the State Government walked away from tightly sequenced land releases in the new growth centres, it would bastardise the consultation process with local government which was crucial to achieve synchronised outcomes.

"If we break the mould of transparent, open consultation, we will increase the cost of providing services and infrastructure, and transfer them from developers to local councils and existing residents in the future," he said.

The President of Macarthur ROC, Cr Phil Costa, said even if local infrastructure such as roads, parks and community facilities were built by developers as promised, it could undermine the Government's capacity to deliver on specific infrastructure projects such as future major transport arteries.

"These major projects – such as the Northwest – Southwest Rail Link – require a 'critical mass' of planned development in the right places at the right time to be viable. How will this occur if developers dictate where and when land release occurs?" he asked.

**The President of Northern Sydney ROC, Cr Pat Reilly**, said the existing planning powers held by the Planning Minister already lacked transparency and accountability and overrode community expectations.

"The Metro Strategy was prepared in response to community concern about the environmental, economic and social problems associated with urban growth. If Cabinet changes course, it will destroy 10 years of long term planning involving community consultation through local government and waste a huge amount of expenditure," he said.

**Cr Denise Wilton, President of Shore ROC**, said if Cabinet overturned the controlled release of land, it would amount to capitulation to land developers at the expense of 250,000 future residents of the new growth areas.

"Either we have consistency or chaos. The Government will make a mockery of consultation with councils and local communities if it changes the rules at this late stage," she said.

**Cr Bill Carney, President of Inner Metropolitan ROC**, said state governments had a long history of operating within a climate of diminished consultation.

"The public perception is that deals are being done behind closed doors rather than in a consultative and transparent fashion. The Government must abide by the original land release criteria if it wants to avoid an electoral backlash from a cynical electorate," he said.

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