

MEDIA RELEASE

Smart Cities opens the door to easing Sydney's housing crisis

The state's largest not-for-profit housing industry body has welcomed plans by the Federal Government to provide better links between transport, jobs and affordable housing in its Smart Cities plan to be released today.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations CEO Wendy Hayhurst said today's announcement that the Government will back investment in infrastructure that supports a 30 minute city is a positive step towards ending housing and commuting stress for millions of Sydney-siders – good news for both the economy and the community.

"It is fantastic that that the Federal Government is at looking at a coherent policy for our cities that will address housing affordability, particularly in Sydney," Ms Hayhurst said.

"Submissions by banks and superannuation funds to the Federal Government's Affordable Housing Working Group clearly said they are ready to open the floodgates to investment in affordable housing projects with the right policy settings.

"That shows that affordable housing can produce a financial return on investment and make our city a better place to live for everyone. We're looking forward to working with the government and partners to make this happen."

Ms Hayhurst said spiralling house prices need addressing for home-buyers and the community sector wants to work with government to provide more housing options, close to jobs and transport for key workers, young people and workers priced out of the private market.

Ms Hayhurst said the Federation supported measures that include:

- **A levy on development windfalls that result from major public infrastructure projects such as the new Badgery's Airport- to be invested back into social and affordable housing along transport routes and close to employment hubs;**
- **The use of surplus government owned land for affordable housing projects by the not for profit community housing sector;**
- **Financing options such as social bonds and loan aggregators to encourage investment in affordable housing projects; and**
- **A signal to the states that affordable housing must be a priority through planning reform, including affordable housing targets.**

"There's no point building new schools, hospitals, childcare centres and retail precincts if new businesses can't attract staff because local housing is too expensive, shift workers can't get home after work or emergency services staff live hours from the communities they care for.

"If we're serious about making Sydney a 30 minute city that's liveable and competitive for business, then well designed affordable housing needs to be treated as infrastructure, and that means making sure it's planned for, and invested in."

Media contact: Jenny Stokes 0478 504 280