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MEDIA RELEASE

New rail corridors must include affordable housing for key workers

Any new train lines to Liverpool and Badgerys Creek must include well designed affordable housing along the new rail corridors to help key workers live and work in Western Sydney and ease Sydney's traffic congestion, the state's peak community housing body, said today.

NSW Federation of Housing Associations' Chief Executive Wendy Hayhurst said the Prime Minister's plan for a high speed rail line to Badgerys Creek and the State Government's proposed driverless train line from Bankstown to Liverpool were opportunities for good planning around affordable housing.

Ms Hayhurst said piecemeal approvals and lack of affordable housing targets along the Sydenham to Bankstown Urban Renewal Corridor and Epping Town Centre were already missed opportunities.

"The Sydenham to Bankstown corridor will provide as many as 36,000 new homes in the next 20 years, most of them within 400 metre of a train station," she said.

"However there are no targets in place for how many of those homes will be set aside as affordable housing and development approvals are already being given to private developers who are benefitting from the up-zoning without any positive flow on to the community.

"Land in Epping Town Centre has also been rezoned to allow another 3,750 homes near a major train station with no plans for any affordable housing at all.

"We need to make sure planning doesn't just concentrate on track work but treats affordable housing as a critical part of these two new rail infrastructure projects so they are not yet another lost opportunity."

The Federation is calling for other urban renewal projects, including already announced plans for North Parramatta, Parramatta Road and the Bays Precinct in the Inner West to include a 30% affordable housing target and clear directions for where these affordable houses will be provided.

Ms Hayhurst said City West's new Exordium Apartments at Green Square showed what the community housing sector can achieve with the right planning mechanisms and access to good land.

The affordable housing units, which opened this morning, will house 104 families and single people, is close good public transport and job opportunities and came in \$1 million under budget.

"Cities around the world see rail corridors as an opportunity to provide good quality, well designed, high density housing close to transport – making it easier for people to work, creating vibrant, busy communities, and keeping cars off the road," Ms Hayhurst said.

"Sydney can do the same if we increase housing density along our rail corridors; insist that developments are well designed and beautiful to look at; earmark surplus government owned land for affordable housing projects; build affordable housing targets into project Masterplans and give developers a clear understanding of how much affordable housing they will need to provide."

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