

Media Release



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NSW Opposition Leader Outlines Planning Reform Priorities

Speaking today at a conference for the leading industry body for the development sector, the Urban Development Institute of Australia (UDIA NSW), the NSW Opposition Leader Barry O'Farrell has reiterated the NSW Coalition's commitment to introducing significant changes to the NSW Planning System. Barry O'Farrell said that, "New South Wales needs a planning system where on the basis of merit alone, applications can be determined."

UDIA NSW Chief Executive Stephen Albin welcomed the Opposition's contribution to the urban policy debate and said that, "planning for our cities is back on the agenda at every level of government and this is a good outcome for the economy and for the community. What we need to ensure is that the principal of aligning infrastructure investment with robust and credible strategic planning is fundamental to urban policy at every level of Government."

The Opposition Leader said that many of the principals for urban policy outlined by the Rudd Government on its announcement this week mirrored commitments made by the NSW Opposition.

As part of its planning reform agenda, the NSW Opposition has committed to abolishing Part 3A of the Environmental Planning and Assessment Act 1979. Barry O'Farrell said that, "its wide ranging power is not evidence of a commitment to getting this state moving."

The Opposition Leader did acknowledge that the Government needed to retain a role in determining state significant projects. Barry O'Farrell said, there'll always need to be a reserve power for genuine state significant projects – it must be exercised in a transparent way and provide certainty for all stakeholders."

In response, Stephen Albin said that, "the Coalition is now in the perfect position to 'cherry-pick' it's planning policies. There are some elements of the existing system that are working well, including some recent reforms. The urban development sector looks forward to consulting with the Coalition in the lead up to the next election."

The Opposition Leader also said that the alternative NSW Government, if elected, would create an Infrastructure Coordinator General role within Government to better coordinate investment in infrastructure. Barry O'Farrell said that, "we can no longer afford, as we did a few months ago, to miss out on a once in a lifetime chance to access billions of dollars in federal funding for infrastructure."

UDIA NSW welcomed this initiative, and Stephen Albin said that, "the creation of an Infrastructure Coordinator General is supported by the urban development sector. Greater coordination between government agencies is essential to delivering more efficient and effective infrastructure investment outcomes."

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