

Media Release

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Ballarat's housing targets at risk without urgent planning reform

Ballarat is on track to run out of available residential greenfield land by 2029, with a looming supply crisis threatening affordability, population growth and economic momentum, according to a new report released today by the Urban Development Institute of Australia Victoria (UDIA).

Launched at UDIA's Regional Industry Briefing and prepared by Ethos Urban, the report shows that Ballarat's key growth corridors in the west and north are projected to be fully developed by 2029 under current demand. New land needed to accommodate future growth continues to be withheld from the market which will place pressure on affordability.

The report also found that Ballarat is falling well short of meeting the government's target of 60 per cent infill development set out in *Plan for Victoria*. Since 2018, over 91 per cent of all new housing approvals in Ballarat have been for detached dwellings. Just 6.8 per cent of approvals have occurred in established suburbs, signalling that local demand for medium- and high-density housing remains weak.

UDIA Victoria Chief Executive Officer Linda Allison said the findings highlight a disconnect between government policy and the realities on the ground.

"Government targets for Ballarat are ambitious, and also miss the point of why people move to regional Victoria. Most people move to cities such as Ballarat to have a home and space. It is exceedingly difficult at present for industry to deliver medium to high density at an affordable price point. In time, we may see more demand for higher density in regions, but it is some way off. If we don't act now to unlock more land, we risk pricing people out of the region," she said.

"This report is a wake-up call. Without immediate planning for future growth areas, Ballarat risks a housing shortfall that could drive up prices, slow population growth, and undermine economic competitiveness."

The release of the report also marks the official launch of UDIA's Ballarat Chapter, which alongside its peer chapters in Bendigo and Geelong will together strengthen the peak body's regional advocacy, representing local development issues at the highest levels of planning and policy decision-making.

"Our new Ballarat Chapter will give local members a stronger voice and greater influence in shaping the future of their city," Ms Allison said. "It's a key part of our commitment to supporting thriving, well-planned regional communities across Victoria."

"The time to act is now. We need a planning system that supports both greenfield and infill development and can respond quickly to the needs of a growing population."

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MEDIA CONTACTS AND REQUESTS FOR INTERVIEW

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