

MEDIA RELEASE

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Getting the housing Australians want

"Our cities are at a critical point in their development. We need a fresh start that helps Australians get the housing they want and gives residents a say in the future of their neighbourhoods and cities," said Jane-Frances Kelly, Cities Program Director at the Grattan Institute.

Launching Grattan's new report, *Getting the housing we want*, Ms Kelly said that under the current system no one wins.

"Developers point to a range of barriers to building housing in established areas, while residents, denied a real role in deciding the future of their neighbourhoods, often feel they have no choice but to oppose all planning applications and all change."

"Yet at the same time, our cities continue to grow and more people are forced to live further from family, friends and jobs," Ms Kelly said.

A previous Grattan report, *The housing we'd choose*, contained the first substantial survey of the housing preferences of Sydney and Melbourne residents. The survey showed that contrary to stereotype, Australians want a mixture of housing choices – not just detached houses.

Grattan's latest report proposes reforms to change what is built to better match what Australians say they want, while enabling residents to take an active role in shaping their neighbourhoods in partnership with the housing industry and government.

The report proposes the creation of opt-in Neighbourhood Development Corporations that bring together residents, developers and governments to oversee significant development in an area. They would be independent bodies with real powers over planning and delivery. They would enable residents, developers and governments to plan together, then act.

They would assume powers over planning, land acquisition and design for the life of the project. A Commonwealth-State Liveability Fund would provide funding for new parks and community facilities in return for support for a significant change in the amount and type of housing in the neighbourhood.

Ms Kelly said governments also needed to encourage high-quality smaller developments, which made up the bulk of new housing in many established suburbs.

A new Small Redevelopment Housing Code would establish clear standards for housing of two storeys and under, which, depending on lot size, contained between 2 and 10 dwellings. These developments would get planning approval within 15 days if they were met. In return, the Code would ensure that small developments are better designed than they are now, and respected the needs of neighbours and the character of an area.

Ms Kelly said that while change was always difficult, the status quo also carried costs for existing residents and for their children. "This report offers a pathway to making our cities better as they grow."

[Download a copy of the report](#)

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