

# \$260 million for cheap homes

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Affordable housing in Sydney's inner suburbs will receive a boost with a new \$260 million project to develop 700 new affordable, social and private housing units in the Glebe-Ultimo precinct.

The project, a joint NSW government and City of Sydney initiative, may also receive commonwealth funding as part of the Rudd government's affordable housing agenda.

The development's \$30 million 3.6 hectare site includes the City of Sydney's 20,000 sq m Bay Street Depot Site and an adjacent 16,000 sq m Glebe site bounded by Bay, Wentworth and Cowper streets, that contains existing social housing.

NSW Premier Morris Iemma welcomed the Rudd government's "substantial policy and funding commitments" to the new development.

"It is important that the three tiers of government work to address this issue," Mr Iemma said.

Sydney Lord Mayor Clover Moore said she had met the federal member for Sydney, Tanya Plibersek, and told *The Australian Financial Review*, "Housing diversity is a key part of our Sustainable Sydney 2030 Strategic Plan, and affordable housing will enable people on low to moderate incomes to live in the city with access to high-quality cultural and community services, public open space and transport.



A model development . . . it is hoped the green housing project will be replicated.

"We are aiming to develop new models of affordable housing which can be replicated around Australia. We want to ensure a healthy mix of accommodation types, not a segregated city with an increasing gulf between the haves and the have-nots," Ms Moore said.

At the preliminary stages of the project, the council and state government announced they would engage urban design experts. Initial design has been undertaken by Hill

Thalis Architecture and Urban Projects, incorporating environmental sustainable design and looking to provide alternative transport solutions.

Housing Minister Matt Brown said that existing tenants would not be left without a home.

"Tenants are being consulted as we speak in face-to-face interviews, and relocated accommodation [for them] will be in an area negotiated with them."

## KEY POINTS

- The joint NSW/City of Sydney initiative may get federal funds.
- The project will have 700 private and public housing units.
- Existing tenants will have a say.

There are currently 90,000 dwellings in City of Sydney municipality, which is anticipated to increase to approximately 132,000 dwellings by 2030.

However, Sydney needs 640,000 new homes in the next 25 years to cope with changing demographics and steep population growth, according to the chief executive of the Urban Taskforce, Aaron Gadiel.

Though he applauded the premier and the lord mayor for "embracing the opportunity to make available under-utilised public land for new housing", Mr Gadiel questioned whether the Glebe-Ultimo development would become a benchmark for other national sustainable housing developments.

"The issue is that this development has a head-start over the others because the Sydney City Council is effectively giving \$30 million worth of land. That's not easy to replicate. Every project will probably get funding, but to be dependent on that kind of injection is not viable."