

# Urban Taskforce

AUSTRALIA

2006-07 Annual Review



## LEADING THE DEBATE

The Urban Taskforce is at the centre of the debate on planning reform in NSW and on housing affordability at the national level.

## CURRENT FOCUS

Contaminated land laws

Environmental Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act

Flood levels and climate change

Housing Affordability Fund

Infrastructure – levies & provision by government

More affordable living through urban renewal

National Rental Affordability Scheme

Planning reform

Regional strategies

Release of employment lands

Release of land for new residential communities

Sale of Commonwealth land

Strata title reform

Standard Instrument for Local Environment Plans

Sydney Metropolitan Strategy and sub-regional strategies

Threatened species reform

Advocacy on behalf of property developers, equity financiers and those in the wider community who enjoy the benefits of new and renewed urban communities

Improving the quality of our urban communities is one of the greatest challenges we all face in the 21st century.

## MISSION

To promote:

- efficient planning and environment laws;
- quality urban design;
- increased economic activity; and
- improved quality of life in urban communities.



Talavera Corporate Centre, North Ryde. Developed by Goodman International; designed by James Fitzpatrick. Overall Winner of the Development Excellence Award 2007.

The Urban Taskforce represents Australia's most prominent property developers and equity financiers. We provide a forum for people involved in the development and planning of the urban environment to engage in constructive dialogue with both government and the community. Growing cities and regions provide the engine room for the economy - creating jobs and investment benefiting everyone. We need to balance the economic benefits with initiatives that protect our environment and quality of life.





Promoting policies that enhance quality of life in urban communities.

## Chairman's Report - Bob Rose

In 2006/2007 – a NSW election year - development issues were at the forefront of community debate across the State.

There were pre-election campaigns by candidates against 50 major residential development projects, worth an estimated \$10 billion and capable of generating some 170,000 jobs.

The NSW Urban Taskforce – as it then was - played a key role in keeping the public discussion balanced and sensible. In particular, we worked closely with representatives of the major political parties to ensure they understood the economic and social consequences of the anti-development policies they were being urged to adopt.

We backed up our public and private lobbying efforts with hard facts. The Urban Taskforce commissioned an independent report *Imagine NSW Without Development* which assessed the implications of any halt in residential housing growth. The report found that anti-development policies could mean the loss of 52,600 construction jobs, create a \$6.6 billion economic black hole and push home ownership out of the reach of average families.

The report injected a great deal of balance to an otherwise skewed media coverage of development issues.

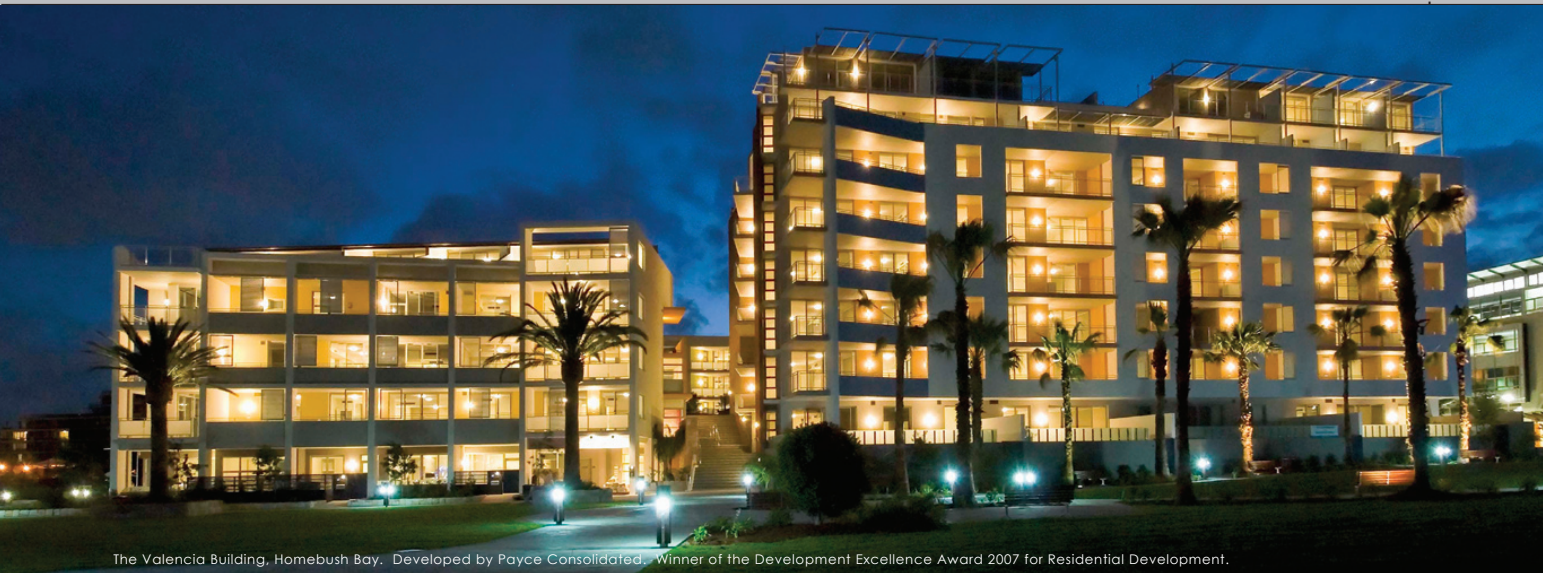
The year was marked with some key wins for the urban development industry, and the wider community who enjoy the benefits of new homes, shopping centres, commercial office space and industrial development.

On the back of successive interest rate rises the Urban Taskforce campaigned for an urgent State government rescue package to bring back confidence in the development industry by:

- Urgently **releasing more land** to create supply;
- **Cutting red tape** and holding costs which can add up to 15 per cent to overall costs; and
- **Slashing government charges** such as section 94 contributions and other developer levies.

The State Government ultimately responded on all three issues – including significant cuts in developer local and state charges and the release of the *Improving the NSW Planning System* discussion paper in November 2007.

Working with all levels of government for a fair, transparent and efficient planning system



The Valencia Building, Homebush Bay. Developed by Payce Consolidated. Winner of the Development Excellence Award 2007 for Residential Development.

Other key achievements for the year include:

- **Reform of BASIX for apartment buildings:** We successfully made the case for more realistic energy efficiency targets for high rise apartment buildings. The NSW Government accepted Urban Taskforce's position that achieving a 20 per cent reduction against the state-wide average is an effective cut of 50 per cent for high rise buildings.
- **Federal involvement:** We pushed hard for the Commonwealth to spend some of its \$17 billion surplus on infrastructure like water, sewage and roads to drive down expensive State levies. The campaign ultimately led to an election commitment by the now-Prime Minister Kevin Rudd, for a federal housing affordability fund, backed by extra Commonwealth funding.

During the year the Urban Taskforce was well served by two chief executives. Sue Robinson stood down in September 2006 after completing a period of outstanding service as the Taskforce's Executive General Manager. Sue was replaced by Terry Barnes, a former NSW Department of Housing director general. Terry served in this role until July 2007. I want to acknowledge and thank both Terry and Sue for their excellent work.

In July 2007 Aaron Gadiel joined the Urban Taskforce as its new Chief Executive. Aaron was a ministerial chief of staff from 1999 to 2007 - serving as the NSW government's senior political advisor in the roads, housing, energy, regional development and mineral resources portfolios. Aaron has a well rounded and detailed knowledge of the current political environment.

We are committed to keeping a strong program of activity going in 2007/2008 and beyond. I thank all of our members who support the Urban Taskforce. I look forward to continuing our efforts - in collaboration with our members, government and the wider community - to keep the Australian development industry strong.



Seeking more affordable housing through availability of land, appropriate financial incentives, good design and efficient planning.

## Secretary/Treasurer's Report

– David Tanevski

I'm pleased to report that the Urban Taskforce's finances remain sound.

The Taskforce is a non-profit organisation, so its success is not measured by its annual surplus, but instead by what it achieves with its membership fees and other revenue during the course of the year. Nonetheless, it is important the finances of the Taskforce are well managed. This year we report our seventh operating surplus since the Taskforce was founded. The surplus - \$27,331 – while modest, continues to ensure the necessary financial stability.

The Urban Taskforce has now raised a total of \$1.4 million for the Warrah Society - a charity which provides residential accommodation, education and day services for over 100 people with intellectual disabilities in Dural, NSW.

The Taskforce prides itself on being a lean, cost effective organisation that delivers results.

One of the key issues pursued by the Taskforce in 2006/2007 has been our focus on making sure the government, councils and the wider community have understood how the extra holding costs caused by delays in approvals are hurting the purchasers of new property assets.

We highlighted the fact that routine development applications were taking up to 9-12 months to determine. Excessive holding costs added up to \$4 billion annually to the buyers of new property assets.

In the Urban Taskforce, whenever we identify a problem we also see it as our responsibility to propose a workable solution. That's why we pushed – both publicly and in private discussions with government for:

- the categories of **exempt development** to be expanded so that approval is not required for minor additions that comply with guidelines or changes of use that do not cause any different impact;
- categories of **complying development** be expanded so that applications for new houses or extensions that comply with council standards can be approved quickly with a minimum of fuss;
- all councils be required to move to **electronic applications** to improve their efficiency so that applicants and builders can easily keep track of their application,
- that certain applications be "**fast-tracked**" with the use of contract planners and private certifiers to overcome council "backlogs";
- the introduction of **regional panels** with experienced and skilled panel members to provide a non-political forum where residents concerns can be properly aired and dealt with; and
- the Department of Planning to more actively **coordinate government departments** when comments are required on proposed developments.

Ultimately our approach led to the government's release of the *Improving the NSW Planning System* discussion paper in November 2007.

Improving our urban environment by  
encouraging dialogue between industry,  
government and the community.

## Chief Executive's Report

- Aaron Gadiel



The 2006/2007 year was a time of change for the Urban Taskforce, with the departure of long-serving Executive General Manager, Sue Robinson, and the appointment of Terry Barnes, who served as Chief Executive until July 2007.

During this period the Taskforce played a key role in significant community debates, for example:

- The Urban Taskforce advocated its support for **a total ban on political donations** – in any form from anyone – to all parties in local, state and federal elections. The Taskforce successfully argued that a developer should not be treated differently from other participants in the political process.
- The Taskforce contributed strongly to the State Government's **Lower Hunter Conservation Plan and Regional Strategy**, providing more certainty to developers. The new strategy provided a template for 115,000 new dwellings in the region over the next 25 years.
- We campaigned for **higher population targets** for the Central Coast in-line with the State government's plans for a \$342 million dam in the Upper Hunter.
- The Taskforce won **amendments to Part 3A of the Environment Planning and Assessment Act** to clarify when the Planning Minister should be involved in projects of State significance. The amendments prevented a doubling of the processing times for projects of State significance.
- The Urban Taskforce continued to **oppose State infrastructure levies** on job-generating development (retail, commercial and industrial and land)
- The Taskforce helped secure **increased funding to the NSW Department of Planning and the Growth Centres Commission** helping these agencies get on with the job of rezoning and assessment of applications and the delivery of services to residential and employment lands.

At our 2006 Development Excellence Awards the Urban Taskforce recognised Leighton Properties as the overall winner for its development of Westpac Place, Sydney. Mr Greg Goodman, Group Chief Executive Officer of Macquarie Goodman was selected as the Property Person of the Year 2007.

I wish to thank those that make the Urban Taskforce possible – its members – for their support in 2006/2007. I can assure them that the work of the Taskforce will only intensify in 2007/2008.

### Performance indicators 2006-07

Submissions made to government	23
Government meetings	32
Events attendees	2,154
Media citations	29
Media Releases	27
Urban Notes	14
Website visits:	33,446

Supporting the development of new employment lands  
- creating jobs and investment benefiting everyone.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

### Executive Committee

The Executive Committee is elected by the members and oversees corporate policy, governance and financial management of the Urban Taskforce.

#### Six meetings

Bob Rose	5	
Bob Ell	4	
Colin Rockliff	4	
David Tanevski	6	
Mark Bouton	3	out of 4 (retired February 2007)
Geoff Cox	5	
Shaun Hannah	3	
Duncan Hardie	2	out of 5 (retired April 2007)
Allen Linz	3	
Steven Papadopoulos	4	out of 5 (retired April 2007)
Richard Scheinberg	5	
David Tierney	5	

### Steering Committee

The Steering Committee brings together leading experts in the urban development industry and considers the Taskforce's policy position and representation activities.

#### 17 meetings of the Steering Committee were held in 2006-07

Bob Rose	11	
Bob Ell	1 out of 2	(appointed April 2007)
Colin Rockliff	3 out of 4	(appointed April 2007)
David Tanevski	17	
Christine Covington	13	
Paul Lalich	11	
Sean Macken	15	
John Wynne	8	



The NSW government cut infrastructure charges and released a planning reform discussion paper only after the Taskforce led a campaign for -

- the urgent release of more land;
- less red tape to reduce holding costs; and
- the slashing of developer levies.

[PHOTO: Vince Sorrenti MC of the 2007 Development Excellence Awards]



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PROFILES

### Chairman - Bob Rose



Bob Rose is the founder and Chief Executive Office of Rose Property Group, founded in 1983. Bob's innate interest and passion for property, entrepreneurial thinking and overall vision are a hallmark of Rose Property Group's success, as demonstrated by the premium \$2 billion residential development Breakfast Point. In addition to award-winning urban communities, the family managed company is involved in various domestic and international ventures across the retail, commercial and residential sectors.

Bob is dedicated to contributing to the development industry as a whole and actively supports developers who embrace their social and environmental responsibilities. Accordingly, in addition to his role at the NSW Urban Taskforce, Bob is a board member of the International Network for Traditional Building Architecture and Urbanism and holds a number of company directorships.

### Deputy Chairman - Bob Ell



Bob Ell is Executive Chairman of the Leda Group of companies established in 1976. Leda is involved with all facets of property development and management including retail, industrial, commercial and residential. This Australian-owned private company has been involved with investment and development of properties worth approximately \$6bn.

### Deputy Chairman - Colin Rockliff



Colin is National Manager, Planning and Architecture for Goodman International. He is responsible for the planning and design division of the group, which encompasses master planning of estates, planning approvals, building design for development approvals and ongoing design management of external consultant architects or design and construct contractors. Colin's career, spanning 27 years in Australia and overseas, has embraced a broad spectrum of property related disciplines with leading architectural, property development and consulting firms.

## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PROFILES

### Secretary/Treasurer - David Tanevski



David Tanevski is a founding Director of the Urban Taskforce. As Managing Director of equity financier KWC Capital Partners, David is actively involved in all aspects of property development and structured finance. KWC Capital Partners has over \$3 billion worth of property development projects currently under advise. David has considerable experience in all stages of property development including financing, strategic planning, PPP's and fund management.

### Geoff Cox



Geoff Cox is Managing Director and one of two principals of the Crighton Properties Group, a Company involved in residential, commercial and retirement developments on the NSW Coast and in regional centres in NSW. Crighton's most extensive developments are located in Tea Gardens on the Mid North Coast, where the Group has yet to develop approximately 2,600 residential homesites (zoned and pending). The Group is currently involved in building or planning its ninth Retirement Village and its third Aged Care Facility.

### Shaun Hannah



Prior to establishing his own company, Hannah Property Group in 2007, Shaun Hannah was CEO Real Estate Development of Valad Property Group, a listed funds management company with over \$2 billion in assets under management. Prior to joining Valad, Shaun held the position of Director of ICA Property Group from 1992 (until acquired by Valad in 2004) and participated in the group's strategy and growth over that period. With more than 20 years in the property industry, Shaun has considerable experience and knowledge in industrial, bulky retail and commercial development.



## EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE PROFILES

Allen Linz



Allen Linz is the Managing Director of Rebel Property Group; a private property investment and development company based in Sydney. Its activities primarily involve development on the eastern seaboard in the residential, commercial and retail sectors. The group has been involved in development and investment projects in excess of \$2bn.

Richard Scheinberg

Richard Scheinberg is managing director of a property investment and development group with extensive investment holdings in NSW and Queensland. He has 30 years experience in the property industry. The group includes McDonald Industries (Sales) and Newport Waterways Estate. The group specialises in urban renewal projects, subdivision and master planned communities.

David Tierney



David Tierney has been a Senior Development Manager for Multiplex for the past 5 years. He has worked on the key projects of Telstra Stadium, Luna Park, Parramatta Justice Centre, Sydney Olympic Park and Maroubra Bay Hotel. Prior to working for Multiplex, David was chief-of-staff to the Minister for Olympics and prior to that the General Manager of Tip Top Bakeries Sydney.



## STEERING COMMITTEE PROFILES

The Steering Committee consists of the Chairman, Deputy Chairmen and the Secretary/Treasurer as well as these additional members.

### Michael Astill (Appointed August 2007)



Michael Astill is a Partner at Blake Dawson in Sydney and has practised in planning and environmental law for over 25 years. He is a Law Society accredited specialist in Local Government and Planning Law and is a member of the Society's Accreditation Committee. Michael advises on all aspects of land development, has published numerous articles and spoken at many seminars on planning law. He is the current author of the Property Development chapter of the LexisNexis Australian Encyclopaedia. From 2003 to 2004 Michael was seconded to the (then) Department of Infrastructure, Planning and Natural Resources as its inaugural Corporate Counsel.

### Paul Lalich



Paul Lalich is a Partner at Allens Arthur Robinson in Sydney. Paul specialises in planning, environment and local government law, and holds a Masters Degree in Law from the University of Sydney. Paul regularly advises on all aspects of major development, including issues arising under Commonwealth and State legislation dealing with environmental protection, land contamination and heritage. Paul has published articles in various local government, planning and property journals, has been a guest lecturer in environment and planning law and has presented papers on related topics at public seminars.

### Sean Macken



Sean Macken is a Director of Hawker Britton, a leading Australian public affairs company. Sean specialises in advising property and development companies on planning and political strategies, and helping those companies navigate state and local planning systems and manage their exposure to government decision making.

## STEERING COMMITTEE & CEO PROFILE

### Alice Spizzo (Appointed December 2007)



Alice Spizzo is Special Counsel in the Property Group at Herbert Geer and Rundle Lawyers, specialising in planning and environmental law. Alice has extensive experience in government and the development industry as a lawyer, policy adviser and executive.

Alice specialises in providing strategic legal advice, particularly in relation to major projects, development contributions, public policy, due diligence and the management of projects in the Land and Environment Court. Alice regularly presents at various seminars on issues management and development, government policy and planning law.

### Chief Executive - Aaron Gadiel (Appointed July 2007)



Aaron Gadiel was a ministerial chief of staff from 1999 to 2007. He served as the NSW government's senior political advisor in the roads, housing, energy, regional development and mineral resources portfolios. In these portfolios Aaron had a strong development focus – supporting policy efforts to promote employment, build new infrastructure and achieve community renewal. In his previous roles Aaron was a major contributor to public policy and parliamentary decision-making – giving him a well rounded and detailed knowledge of the current political environment. Aaron has a bachelor of commerce and an honours degree in law.

### Subcommittees

The Urban Taskforce convenes subcommittees of its members to discuss policy positions on key issues.

The subcommittees that met during 2006/2007 were:

- Bulky Goods
- Growth Centres
- Lower Hunter
- Mid North Coast
- Planning
- SEPP 65/Residential Flat Design Code

The Taskforce won more realistic BASIX energy efficiency targets for high rise apartment buildings. The NSW government accepted our arguments that a 20 per cent reduction against the state-wide average is an effective cut of 50 per cent for high rise buildings.



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