

## NEWS

**Parramatta Road plan** 27,000 dwellings on way

# Housing boost sets opponents on edge

**James Robertson**

The opposition and community groups have questioned whether the state government's \$31 billion plan to redevelop Parramatta Road will overwhelm local infrastructure.

The final strategy for the Parramatta Road redevelopment, released on Wednesday, plans for 27,000 new dwellings lining the 20-kilometre corridor around the freeway from Homebush to Haberfield, or a population increase of 55,000 over 30 years.

"[That's] at least 20,000 new students," said Ian Baker, acting head of the Catholic Education Commission, which represents nearly 600 schools. "That's 800 additional classrooms required in a region where schools are already at or over capacity – and land to expand or build new schools is scarce and costly."

But Planning Minister Rob Stokes said the government had already significantly scaled down its plan for the redevelopment, from a previous 40,000 homes, in response to feedback from the community and councils about the capacity of local infrastructure.

The strategy commits to \$200 million in infrastructure projects to be rolled out immediately in a process jointly overseen by councils. A broader schedule of infrastructure projects has been costed but not funded, including \$150 million for a previously floated Burwood to CBD rapid bus service, 66 hectares of green space, \$311 million in contributions to educational facilities, additional hospital funding and 33 kilometres of upgraded pedestrian and cycling links.

The state government says those projects are expected to be met by developer contributions, legally required to build residential projects.

"This will ensure that infrastructure provision and new development occur together," a spokesman for state government developer UrbanGrowth said.

The opposition said the state government

was unprepared for the population growth. "Until the money is on the table [...] there is no money," said opposition planning spokesman Michael Daley. "What we want to see [...] is some firm commitments for supporting infrastructure, more money for schools and more money for hospitals."

On Wednesday, the development lobby queried the decision to downsize a previous plan for residential development, given a recent projected increase in the city's population forecasts, now predicting Sydney needed an extra 726,000 homes by 2036.

"It's a slightly strange twist given that the housing targets have gone up about 10 per cent," said Chris Johnson, chief executive of the Urban Taskforce, a group representing property developers.

**'This plan is nothing more than a green light for a developer invasion.'**

**Jamie Parker, Greens MP**

Zoning documents released on Wednesday show opportunity remains for projects as high as 80 metres, or 25 storeys, in the "Kings Bay" precinct, between Burwood and Five Dock.

"This plan is nothing more than a green light for a developer invasion of suburbs adjoining Parramatta Road," Greens MP Jamie Parker said.

While developers said the inclusion of a 5 per cent minimum inclusion of affordable housing in the redevelopment would drive up the cost of homes, Labor said the targets were much too low.

But the NSW Federation of Housing Associations welcomed the inclusion, saying it was the first major urban renewal outside a small part of the city of Sydney to include such a target. "This is a very, very positive step forward," chief executive Wendy Hayhurst said.