

No more apartments but more Copenhagen for Sydney



City of Sydney planning director Graham Jahn says Sydney will not be a sprawling suburb nor an Asian-styled apartment city. **Daniel Munoz**



by **Su-Lin Tan**

Sydney's future residential shape will start to mirror Copenhagen's high-density middle housing as the apartment boom starts to subside, the City of Sydney's director of planning, development and transport Graham Jahn says.

Mr Jahn, who is responsible for how Sydney is built, says Sydney will not be a sprawling suburb nor an Asian-styled apartment city.

"Copenhagen is the perfect example," he said at the Council on Tall Buildings and Urban Habitat conference in Sydney on Monday. "It's not the individual houses on blocks or the Hong Kong apartment-style solution. The majority [of Sydney] will reside in dense living in the middle, which does deliver multi-generations and families.

"That is where we need to go."

Questions about Sydney's housing identity were asked at the conference, given the NSW government's plans to push the city's population to 8 million by 2061.

"I think we are moving to a period that is not about doing investor apartments but genuine alternatives for families to live in compact solutions instead of the freestanding house," Mr Jahn said.

"There is a whole new thinking about dwelling construction."

But it wasn't just dwelling types, but the ownership of the dwellings that would change as the affordability issue became more critical, Sydney Architecture Studio director Ken McBryde said.

"The future housing is seen as a 'service' rather a thing to own ... as a 'subscription'," he said.

"You can see it already in brochures, where developers are selling a lifestyle not a product. If you speak to young people, they don't want the burden of ownership, and they probably can't afford it."

The [housing offering in Australia is going through a transition, particularly in Sydney and Melbourne](#), where long-term rental products, such as [build-to-rent units](#) or multi-family apartments, are being considered as affordability worsens.

Urban Taskforce's chief executive, Chris Johnson, warned that Sydney's transition into a diversified residential city would be difficult without planning reform, pointing towards the Productivity Commission's recent report that raised significant issues about inflexible planning systems.

"The report, however, does express concern that the original proposals to simplify the 'overly restrictive zoning regulations' are not part of the current package," he said.

"The Urban Taskforce supports the Productivity Commission's concerns about the excessive number of zones in the NSW planning system at a time when many uses are able to be located together."

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