

'Planned precincts' to match new housing with roads, parks and schools: government

SMH 22 November 2017
Jacob Saulwick

The state government is pushing back against criticism of its housing development zones across Sydney, saying that without them housing growth would not be matched by local infrastructure.



Rhodes East Priority Precinct: flyover

Up to 3,600 new homes, a potential new primary school and river pool are planned for Rhodes under new proposed plans unveiled by the state government.

[The Labor Opposition says](#) it would scrap the government's policy of declaring areas "priority precincts" targeted for extra housing and infrastructure.

But according to the Department of Planning and Environment, only one in five new dwellings approved for development in Sydney recently has been within a so-called "priority precinct."

The government has this month scrapped the "priority precinct" name, replacing it with "planned precincts." But it says these areas are not responsible for community angst around over-development.

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"There's a lot of misinformation out there around what's in these planned precincts," said Brendan Nelson, the deputy secretary of growth, design and programs at the Department of Planning and Environment.



A mix of apartment towers and terrace houses have been proposed as part of the draft Priority Precinct Plan for Rhodes East. Photo: Supplied

"Sydney'siders can see a lot of growth, and yes there is a bit of fatigue but a majority of the growth that's going on is outside these planned precincts," said Mr Nelson.

[Precincts are proposed](#) in places such as Bardwell Park, Glenfield, Ingleside, Riverwood, St Leonards, and Burwood, Strathfield and Homebush.

A public exhibition has recently finished for a precinct of about 3600 new homes on former industrial land at Rhodes East on the Parramatta River.

The Rhodes East development will be the first within the program to include infrastructure paid for with a \$20,000 per dwelling "special infrastructure contribution" or SIC levy.

That levy, to be charged on top of contributions required by council, will raise about \$74 million to be spent on road upgrades, pedestrian and cycle paths, and on acquiring land for a new primary school.

"What Daley and the ALP are offering is effectively the same old 'we are just going to build units in your suburb, but there's no planning... just holus-bolus, developers, spot-rezoning, fill your boots, same as we've always done," said Planning Minister Anthony Roberts.

"But what we're saying is... we know this increase is coming, but its going to come with an infrastructure spend," said Mr Roberts.

"That's the importance of the SIC: it's collected locally and spent locally."



Minister for Planning Anthony Roberts with Greater Sydney Commission Chief Commissioner Lucy Turnbull.



A spokeswoman for the City of Canada Bay said the council approached the department of planning in 2014 to nominate Rhodes East as a priority precinct. "It is exciting to see the ideas put forward then coming to fruition," the spokeswoman said.

The Department says that SICs will be levied on all planned precincts, but will be set at different rates depending on an area's capacity to pay.

Labor's Mr Daley, however, re-iterated his criticism of the precincts, and said he would put in place a "whole new regime."

"You can levy a SIC anywhere you want," said Mr Daley. "It doesn't have to be a priority precinct."

The land proposed for the new Rhodes East development Photo: Department of Planning and the Environment

"It just pulls the whole thing out of the hands of the community, out of the hands of the council, and into the minister's office."

<http://www.smh.com.au/nsw/planned-precincts-to-match-new-housing-with-roads-parks-schools-government-20171122-gzqhxo.html>